

IBAC Technical Report Summary

Subject: Caribbean (CAR) and South America (SAM) PIRG

Meeting: 1st GREPECAS Air Safety Board Meeting

IBAC File: PIRGs

Reported by: Adalberto Febeliano

Summary

The main objectives of the 1st GREPECAS Air Safety Board meeting were to establish its internal procedures, to review the list of shortcomings and deficiencies classified as Urgent and to define which the first actions should be. Among the issues discussed are of special interest to Business Aviation the following:

- a) Several of the pending shortcomings and deficiencies in the region had in fact already been eliminated, and the Aviation Safety Board had the opportunity to withdraw them from the official GREPECAS listing;
- b) The Board has agreed that, regardless of the uniform Urgent classification of all shortcomings and deficiencies, more granularity was needed when prioritizing the Board's actions, and a methodology used by IATA in the PAAST (Pan American Aviation Safety Team) was adopted;
- c) Specific action plans were agreed to send an ICAO Technical Mission to Georgetown, Guyana, to assess what can be done to allow that country to effectively install an ACC in the Georgetown FIR, which today does not offer that service; and
- d) Specific action plans were agreed to send a multidisciplinary Technical Mission, composed of ICAO, IATA and Boeing officers, to Guatemala city, to inspect its international airport and to suggest measures that may mitigate the unsafe conditions thereof prevailing.

Implications for Business Aviation

The continuing presence of IBAC within GREPECAS work groups is improving the knowledge of government officers about the importance of business aviation.

This is reflected in papers presented in recent technical subgroup meetings, some of them mentioning the need to make special provisions in the planning and implementation processes for International General Aviation.

IBAC's participation in the Aviation Safety Board presents a very good channel to convey Business Aviation safety concerns in the CAR and SAM regions to the proper ICAO and/or States officers.

Decisions Required

Recommendation: That the POC continue supporting the position that IBAC be an Observer of both GREPECAS and GREPECAS Aviation Safety Board.

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Place and Date: Miami, 27th and 28th of November 2000

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1. Preface

The author has adopted the principle to keep in this report basic information on what is GREPECAS and how it is composed. This information is repeated from the previous reports, so persons who have been following IBAC's activities in those regions may wish to jump directly to the section 3. Furthermore, anyone facing difficulties with the acronyms and special words and expressions is emphatically invited to contact the author in the address below in order to obtain a glossary of terms or a plain-English translation.

2. Introduction

GREPECAS is the PIRG for both the CAR (Caribbean) and the SAM (South America) regions. It is assisted by the 2 Regional Offices ICAO has in those regions, in Mexico City (Mexico) and in Lima (Peru). Its President is Mr. Pedro Dañino, from the Mexican DGAC, and its Secretary is Mr. Paulo Hegedus, from ICAO's Lima Office (albeit Mr. Hegedus is expected to retire by February next year, and to be replaced by Mr. Raymond Ybarra, head of ICAO Office in Mexico).

As in other PIRGs, GREPECAS has several technical subgroups that are constantly evaluating the status of the air navigation in the regions, based mainly in reports and requests made by IATA representatives. The subgroups meet at least once between GREPECAS meetings, and prepare reports containing shortcomings, deficiencies and proposed solutions for them. These reports are sent to the GREPECAS plenary, where they are reviewed by all present States and, in most of the cases, endorsed by them for enforcement by the respective ICAO Regional Office.

These shortcomings and deficiencies are prioritized according to ICAO's standardized terms: "U" (urgent) for those that have a direct impact on flight safety, and that require immediate action; "A" for those that have high priority and positive impact over the safe air navigation; and "B" for those intermediate items which have positive impact over the regularity of the air navigation.

It is always worthwhile to mention that only the States have executive power, i.e., both GREPECAS and the Regional Offices may present suggestions and/or push for the improvement of a situation, but the implementation of its solution must be carried out by a State, or by somebody who was duly authorized by it.

Due to the ever-increasing number of shortcomings and deficiencies classified as "U", the 9th GREPECAS meeting decided to establish an Aviation Safety Board, which will normally convene 1 day prior to the actual GREPECAS annual meeting and which is expected to assist the States in the solution of them.

3. The Meeting

The Aviation Safety Board (originally named Air Safety Board) is composed by both ICAO Regional Offices Directors, all Presidents of the Technical Subgroups and Observers from several organizations.

The first meeting of the Board was intended to review its Terms of Reference, to establish its modus operandi and to perform an initial review in the "U" shortcomings and deficiencies list.

The Terms of Reference and the Work Programme were duly approved, with minor editorial changes, and the new name was suggested to let it clear that the Board's activities should also encompass airports. The modus operandi will emphasize the use of e-mail and electronic communications to bring more agility to the Board's activities.

4. Discussions

It was agreed that it should be recommended to the subgroups to perform a more judicious filtering of shortcomings and deficiencies, prior to submitting them for considerations of the Board, since the review of the present list has concluded that several of the actions being demanded were, in fact, already implemented by the States.

The Board recognized the distinction between shortcomings and deficiencies that called for generic (or systemic) resolutions and those that were rather specific. The difficulties in the use of the English language by air traffic controllers is an example of the first type, while the ACC deficiencies on Georgetown is an example of the second.

It has been agreed that, in order to deal properly with the systemic shortcomings and deficiencies, it would be necessary to have better assessments from the subgroups, through the use of spreadsheet or database capabilities, bringing more detail than what was available at the meeting.

Because all shortcomings and deficiencies brought to the Board's attention already carried the "U" classification the members decided that more granularity would be needed in order to prioritize effectively its actions.

IATA has suggested the adoption of a methodology already in use by the PAAST (Pan American Aviation Safety Team), which classifies items taking into account their URGENCY (removing potential for accident) and their IMPORTANCE (increasing safety margins).

The PAAST Priority Assessment Chart is reproduced as Annex 1, and classifies shortcomings and deficiencies in 4 categories:

- i. Act Now (set Action Group);
- ii. Action Plan (Short Term);
- iii. Define Remedial Activities (Mid Term); and
- iv. Set Study Group (Long Term).

The Board has identified that the Technical Subgroups had different concepts on classifying a shortcoming or deficiency as urgent, since the list reviewed contained items that were clearly at different levels in terms of threatening air transportation safety.

Both as a test bed for understanding its own capabilities and as a working exercise, the Board has chosen 2 shortcomings and deficiencies to deal with immediately: the lack of ACC services in the Georgetown FIR (Guyana) and the several physical deficiencies in Guatemala City international airport.

The former will be dealt with by a team of Lima's ICAO Regional Office Technical Advisors (eventually assisted by other ICAO officers) which will be sent to Georgetown for in loco assessment of the present situation. The Technical Mission will be funded primarily by IATA, as part of the PAAST efforts, which will also send representatives accompanying the team.

For the latter the ASB has designed a similar action. Mexico's ICAO Regional Office will send a team of Technical Advisors to Guatemala City Airport, which apparently has serious deficiencies in terms of runway conditions and ground visual aids. In this particular case there was no need for funding, but again PAAST was instrumental in securing Boeing's assistance, which will send one of its airport specialists alongside ICAO's group.

Finally, there were long discussions on how to improve AIS/MAP activities in the CAR and SAM regions, felt to be left with much lower priority than the other flight protection activities.

The Board decided that, due to the nature of this meeting and the relatively small participation of the Technical Subgroups Presidents, another meeting will be needed prior to the next GREPECAS meeting. Such meeting is expected to happen in Mexico City, immediately after the ALLPIRG meeting in Montreal.

5. Conclusions

GREPECAS Aviation Safety Board is the first effort of its type ever tried by a PIRG and, as such, will have to be evaluated over a few years before its usefulness is fully understood.

The missions envisaged in both Guyana and Guatemala will make contacts at high government levels, aiming at enhancing the priority of the needed investments, and it is expected that during the second ASB meeting this procedural means may be evaluated by the members.

IBAC's participation in the ASB, as mentioned before, is definitely benefiting the positive perception and overall image of Business Aviation by the State Officers involved, and should be maintained.

Since the ASB is expected to convene 1 day prior to the GREPECAS meetings, and since IBAC is already committed to participating in GREPECAS, there is clearly a positive cost – benefit relationship.

As far as the next ASB meeting is concerned, one shouldn't expect more than a review of the results from the 2 Technical Missions, a better assessment of the systemic shortcoming and deficiencies and an increased participation from the Technical Subgroups Presidents.

6. Needed Actions

The POC must support the position that IBAC continues to be a Member of the CAR/SAM Aviation Safety Board, and that IBAC be present in all venues of said Board.

IBAC must also analyze in which areas it could assist ASB's actions. Since funding is hardly a feasible alternative, what IBAC can bring in terms of technical expertise?

IBAC should develop a short directory of capabilities of its personnel and usual collaborators, to be made available to the PIRGS and, eventually, directly to the States.

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