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CO-ORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELDS OF AVIATION,  
SHIPPING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN REGARD TO SAFETY  
AT SEA AND IN THE AIR

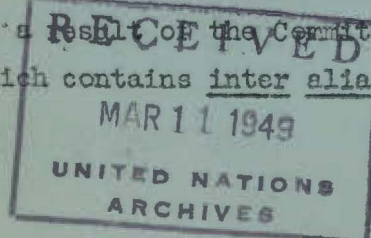
The need for co-ordination of activities in the fields of aviation, shipping and telecommunications in regard to safety of life at sea and in the air was recognized by the Temporary Transport and Communications Commission (May 1946) as one of the substantive problems requiring immediate attention.

The Transport and Communications Commission at its first session (February 1947) suggested to the Economic and Social Council that a committee of experts should prepare a factual report describing existing measures for co-ordination of safety and rescue arrangements and, if possible, make recommendations based on the considered views of the representatives of the specialized agencies constituting the Committee. Meanwhile the United Kingdom Government had already decided to convene a Conference on Safety of Life at Sea.

The Economic and Social Council at its fourth session (February-March 1947) after having considered the above-mentioned suggestion noted that the United Kingdom was prepared to convene, prior to the Conference on Safety of Life at Sea, a preparatory committee of experts to consider the co-ordination of safety activities.

The Committee, called the Preparatory Committee of Experts on Co-ordination of Safety at Sea and in the Air, met in London from 27 January 1948 to 6 February 1948. It was composed of experts from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Provisional Maritime Consultative Council (PMCC). As a result of the Committee's work a report with an annex was adopted which contains inter alia

/A factual





A factual statement of the jurisdiction of each organization in matters relating to safety at sea or in the air over the sea;  
A consolidated list of subjects in which co-ordination might be necessary at the present time, which list was established on the basis of the statements prepared by the experts of each organization outlining the technical and other matters in which they deemed co-ordination necessary;

Recommendations on the methods for achieving co-ordination between the interested organizations assuming that co-ordination at national level is effective;

Recommendations for co-ordinated action with regard to some of the subjects contained in the above-mentioned list.

This report was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the information of the Transport and Communications Commission and to the United Nations Maritime Conference and the Safety of Life at Sea Conference for their consideration.

The Transport and Communications Commission at its second session (April 1948) noted with satisfaction the achievement of the Preparatory Committee and inserted in its report a resolution (no. 8) on this subject.

The Economic and Social Council at its seventh session considered the report of the Transport and Communications Commission, and, in a resolution adopted on 28 August 1948, instructed the Secretary-General

(a) To transmit to each of the organizations represented at the Preparatory Committee of Experts which considered the co-ordination of activities in the fields of shipping, aviation and telecommunication with regard to safety of life, the report of the Preparatory Committee, as an initial basis for co-operative endeavour amongst them.

(b) To submit to the next session of the Transport and Communications Commission a report on the action taken by the Safety of Life at Sea Conference and on any activities undertaken by the specialized agencies in the light of the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts.

In compliance with the above-mentioned resolution, the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts was sent to the organizations as directed, and the following report is hereby submitted, of which the first part deals with the action taken by the Safety of Life at Sea Conference and the second part with the activities undertaken by the specialized agencies, both in the light of the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts.

/I. Action taken



I. Action taken by the Safety of Life at Sea Conference  
in the light of the report of the  
Preparatory Committee of Experts

Introduction

The Safety of Life at Sea Conference met in London from 23 April to 10 June 1948. The United Kingdom Government, which had convened the Preparatory Committee of Experts, had forwarded the Committee's report to the Safety of Life at Sea Conference for consideration, and it was circulated among the delegations.

In addition to the United Nations, other organizations interested in the co-ordination of activities with regard to safety of life, i.e. ICAO, IMO and ITU, were represented by observers. The representatives of ICAO and IMO submitted documents to the Conference concerning matters dealt with by the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts.

The Safety of Life at Sea Conference prepared and opened for acceptance the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1948. It approved the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1948, and adopted resolutions and recommendations.

One of these recommendations (no. 23) reads as follows:

"23. Co-ordination of Safety at Sea and in the Air  
The Conference,

Having considered the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts on Co-ordination of Safety at Sea and in the Air submitted to the Conference;

Having recognized that it is desirable to co-ordinate activities regarding safety on and over the sea;

Having taken into account while drawing up the present Convention the recommendations contained in the said Report and those submitted by the international organizations concerned;

Recommends that, for the common goal of safety, co-operative action be continued and strengthened along the lines suggested in the Report."

From the text of this recommendation, it may be seen that the Safety of Life at Sea Conference;

Approved in principle the machinery for co-ordination as set forth in the Report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts and recommended that co-operative action along those lines be continued and strengthened,

/Took into account



Took into account some of the specific recommendations concerning technical questions contained in the report of the Committee of Experts.

The main subjects of a technical character concerning which the Conference implemented the recommendations of the experts are the following:

1. Rules for the prevention of collision at sea (aircraft on water)

The experts recognized that when seaplanes are on the surface of the water there is risk of collision with vessels or with other seaplanes. It is therefore necessary to achieve satisfactory co-ordination between international agencies interested in the rules for the prevention of collisions at sea.

The Conference decided that the rules for seaplanes on the water should be included in the regulations for preventing collisions at sea and that the rules regarding seaplanes should appear with the relevant shipping rules throughout the collision regulations.

It may be added that proposals to extend these rules to cover the period in which the seaplane was alighting or taking off and presumed in flight were turned down.

2. Allocation of frequencies

The experts felt that there would be considerable advantage in having any one of the three organizations (ICAO, IMO, and IMCO) consider the needs of the interests it represents for the allocation of frequencies and submit its point of view to the competent ITU Conference.

A practical case for such co-operation arose on the occasion of the International Administrative Aeronautical Radio Conference, which met in Geneva (15 May to 25 September 1948). The action taken by the Conference in this case is described in part II, section 2 (ii) of this document.

3. Radio equipment on ships, lifeboats, and other survival craft

The experts considered that there was a case for some standardization of the equipment required to be carried in lifeboats and survival craft.

The Conference, in the regulations (chapter IV, regulation 13, paragraph (a), and regulation 14, paragraph (a)) provided that radio equipment for fitting in motor lifeboats as well as lifeboat portable radio apparatus should be capable of transmitting and receiving on the distress frequency in the medium frequency band, and, in the case of new installations, should be capable of transmitting on the high frequency and the class of emission prescribed for survival craft by

/the Radio Regulations.



the Radio Regulations. Survival craft fitted with this equipment will thus be able to establish contact with aircraft.

4. Radio regulations

The Committee of Experts felt that the responsibility of ITU in this matter did not restrict the right of any specialized agency to establish additional regulations and procedures applying peculiarly to its own service as long as they do not conflict with the International Telecommunication Convention and the Radio Regulations.

The 1929 Safety of Life at Sea Convention in its article 42 had already prohibited the misuse of distress signals on every ship covered by the Convention. The 1948 Conference adopted a revised wording which extends the same prohibition to aircraft (chapter V, regulation 9).

5. Visual distress signals

The experts stressed the need to ensure that distress signals either from ships or from aircraft should be easily recognized at sea by aircraft commanders and by masters of vessels. They stated that it was essential that a common list of distress signals should be prepared and for this purpose they recommended that ICAO should communicate to the Safety Conference a list of distress signals used by aircraft.

The Safety Conference adopted a list of signals for life-saving applicable only to shipping.

It decided that smoke signals of an approved type (for daytime use) should be of an orange colour to facilitate location by aircraft (chapter III, regulation 11, paragraph (a), sub-paragraph (xvi)). The same orange colour has been chosen for lifeboat sails for the same reason (chapter III, regulation 11, paragraph (a), sub-paragraph (vi)).

6. Radio aids to navigation

The experts recommended the closest possible co-ordination between the interests of shipping, aviation, and telecommunications as regards the planning, introduction and development of radar and radio aids to navigation. They also mentioned the advisability wherever possible of the joint adoption of radio aids and a reduction in the number of different kinds or types of aids, as well as some standardization of component parts with resulting economy and subsequently wider use of the aids.

In this respect the Conference adopted a recommendation (no. 18) in which it was stressed inter alia (paragraphs (c) and (d)) that

/"Governments should



"Governments should ensure that in the selection of systems of navigational aids for aircraft and ships due weight is given to the relative advantages of the various systems from both points of view, and that when systems are selected that can serve the needs of both ships and aircraft they shall be so organized and operated as to serve those needs as fully as practicable", and that "Governments should participate in the regular exchange of information on the whole subject of radar and radio navigational aids."

It may be pointed out that devices made compulsory for certain categories of ships under the new Convention will facilitate the search both for ships and aircraft in distress. The Safety at Sea Conference decided (chapter V, regulation 12, paragraph (a)) that all ships of 1,600 gross tons and upwards shall be fitted with direction-finding apparatus, as this apparatus is of value both as a navigational instrument and as an aid to locating ships, aircraft or survival craft. The provision of such apparatus on ships between 1,600 and 5,000 tons may be deferred for a period of two years from the date on which the Convention comes into force, if in the opinion of the Administration this is necessary. The Conference also decided (paragraph (b)) that Administrations may exempt any ships under 5,000 tons from this requirement in areas where they consider it unreasonable or unnecessary.

7. Meteorology (reports from ships to aircraft in emergency)

In their report, the experts pointed out the difference in the wording between the 1929 Safety Convention, article 34, regulation XLVI and the International Radio Regulations, Atlantic City, 1947, article 45, paragraphs 4 and 7. Both of these texts deal with the transmission of information regarding ice and tropical storms.

This discrepancy no longer exists. Chapter V, regulation 2, paragraph (d) of the 1948 Safety of Life at Sea Convention states that the procedure as prescribed by the Radio Regulations is to be used.

8. Assistance in distress (including legal obligation and requisition)

The experts stated that the Safety Conference would, as they understood it, be asked to extend in favour of aircraft in distress, the legal obligation which already existed in favour of vessels in distress, according to which the master of a ship, on receiving a wireless distress signal, must proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress. The ICAO representatives stated that in their opinion the Safety Conference should also consider the  
/possibility of



possibility of granting under certain conditions to commanders of aircraft the right to requisition the aid of any ship, which was already granted to the ship masters in the 1929 Safety Convention.

The new Safety Convention provides (chapter V, regulation 10, paragraph (a)) that "the master of a ship at sea, on receiving a signal from any source that a ship or aircraft or survival craft is in distress, is bound to proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress..."

However, the right to requisition ships, which is conferred upon the master of a ship in distress according to the Convention, has not been granted to the commander of an aircraft in distress.

#### 9. Ice patrol

The experts in their report contemplated the possibility that the International Ice Patrol might perform duties additional to those provided for by the Safety at Sea Convention.

Chapter V, regulation 5, paragraph (b) of the new Convention provides that ships and aircraft used for the ice patrol service and the study and observation of ice conditions may be assigned other duties by the managing Government...". The new provisions might therefore allow in some instances for the co-operation of ships and aircraft assigned to the ice patrol service in order to perform such tasks as salvage and rescue.

#### 10. Coast watching and lifeboats

The experts felt that the problem of coast watching and lifeboats was wholly one for national co-operation.

Accordingly the new Safety Convention provides (chapter V, regulation 15, paragraph (a)) that "each contracting Government undertakes to ensure that any necessary arrangements are made for coast watching and for the rescue of persons in distress at sea round its coasts". It also provides (paragraph (b)) that "each contracting Government undertakes to make available information concerning its existing rescue facilities and the plans for changes therein, if any".

### II. Activities undertaken by the specialized agencies in the light of the report of the Preparatory

#### Committee of Experts

As already stated, the four organizations participating in the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts were ICAO, IMO, ITU, and PMCC.



1. International Civil Aviation Organization

i. Rules for the operation of seaplanes on water

ICAO's Rules of the Air and Air Traffic Control Division (RAC) is concerned inter alia with framing rules for the operation of seaplanes and amphibians on water, subject to further action by the ICAO Air Navigation Committee and the ICAO Council. At its third session in Montreal in April 1948 the Division expressed its concern over the possibility of future conflict between rules concerning lights to be displayed by seaplanes and amphibians on the surface of the water as promulgated by ICAO and in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea to be framed at the Safety of Life at Sea Conference (1948) and assumed that the matter would be co-ordinated.

The ICAO Council will consider, perhaps in the course of 1949, action to bring the present ICAO "Rules of the Air", known as Annex 2 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, into agreement with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (1948) so that the two sets of regulations may come into force simultaneously. (See part I, sections 1 and 5 of this document).

ii. Use of distress frequencies and procedures common to aircraft and surface craft

In a progress report to the ICAO Council dated 31 August 1948, (ICAO document 6089, C/685) explaining action taken under delegated authority during its recess, the President of the Council stated that he believed it would be desirable for ICAO to meet in the near future with IMCO and possibly with ITU and IMO as well, in accordance with the procedure recommended in the report of the Preparatory Committee on Co-ordination. One of the subjects upon which he thought co-ordination might be desirable was the use of distress frequencies and the establishment of distress procedures common to aircraft and surface craft.

iii. Conventions relating to assistance and salvage

The report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts does not mention the convention or conventions relating to assistance and salvage in the aviation field. It is, however, deemed essential to inform the Transport and Communications Commission of the steps taken by the ICAO Legal Committee as they may lead to the establishment of a convention which would, in some respects, be the equivalent for aviation of the Safety of Life at Sea Convention for shipping.

The third session of the ICAO Legal Committee was held in Lisbon in September and October 1948. Among the subjects discussed which raise

/questions of



questions of inter-agency co-ordination were search, assistance and rescue. The Committee requested the ICAO secretariat to prepare appropriate documentation on the subject including material available from the Safety of Life at Sea Conference.

The Committee studied the possibility of establishing a single convention relating to assistance and salvage of aircraft or by aircraft on land and at sea, whereby both ships and aircraft in distress would be aided by aircraft, and requested its members to obtain necessary information and instructions on the subject.

This new convention would supersede a convention which has been adopted but has not yet come into force and a convention, the establishment of which was under consideration. The first is the Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules relating to Assistance and Salvage of Aircraft or by Aircraft at Sea (Brussels, 1938) which was signed by sixteen States but has not yet been ratified by any State. The second is the draft convention for the Unification of Certain Rules relating to Assistance and Salvage of Aircraft by Aircraft on Land which has been under study by international aviation legal experts but has never reached the signature stage.

The Committee also considered the problems relating to remuneration for search and rescue operations.

On the other hand, the Committee stated that it was desirable to co-ordinate the technical, financial and legal aspects of the entire problem and prepare a plan on that basis. It recommended to the ICAO Council that such a plan be prepared.

#### iv. Action taken at regional conferences

ICAO holds a series of regional conferences designed to cover the major international flying areas of the world. The main purposes of these conferences are: to examine existing aeronautical facilities for airports, navigational aids, communications, air traffic control, meteorology, operations, and search and rescue; and to determine the additional facilities required and the operating procedures necessary for the safe and efficient development of international air navigation with respect to the regions concerned.

The Second North Atlantic Regional Air Navigation Meeting of ICAO was held in Paris in May 1948. One of the recommendations (SAR no. 9) emanating from the meeting was that ICAO call to the attention of Contracting States the report of the Preparatory Committee of Experts, especially paragraph 21 thereof, and urge that the principles therein be adopted, and that ICAO carry out co-ordination recommended in the report using the

/"Consolidated List of



"Consolidated List of Subjects" contained in the Annex thereto as the basis for development of improved co-ordination as it relates to search and rescue.

Recommendations which are similar in principle were made at the Second European-Mediterranean Regional Air Navigation Meeting held in Paris in May 1948 (SAR no. 11) and at the North Pacific Regional Air Navigation Meeting held in Seattle, Washington, in July 1948 (SAR no. 24).

The Preparatory Committee of Experts made several recommendations concerning various aspects of the operation of ocean weather stations.

The above-mentioned Second North Atlantic Regional Air Navigation Meeting adopted subsequently two recommendations concerning ocean weather stations (MET no. 28 and SAR no. 9) which were endorsed by the ICAO Council.

Both of these in substance propose that ICAO advise all interested Contracting States that the full implementation of the ocean weather station programme remains an essential requirement for the safe and economic operation of aircraft in the region and that ICAO urge that every endeavour be made to secure full implementation as soon as possible.

It will be recalled that the ocean weather station programme was established at the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (FICAO) Conference of the North Atlantic States (London, 17 to 25 September 1946). Thirteen States participated in this Conference and IMO was represented by an observer. One of the major problems at the Conference was to determine which body would co-ordinate the project. The agreement which was signed at this Conference provided in article 2 (2) that the services to be performed by the ocean weather stations would be carried out by interested Governments, and that (P)ICAO would co-ordinate the general programme of operation and keep IMO advised of any action taken in connection with each co-ordination, inviting IMO to send representatives to participate in any meetings called for this purpose. The agreement further provided in article 2 (4) that (P)ICAO standards would be observed in the operation of the ocean weather stations, but that the manner of making and transmitting meteorological observations would be in accordance with IMO procedure.

Section 2 of Annex 1 to the agreement states that the ocean weather stations will perform meteorological and search and rescue services for both aircraft and surface vessels, and will furnish navigational aids and air traffic control.

Thus a programme, originally sponsored by (P)ICAO, which requires (P)ICAO to co-ordinate the action of several Governments on the one hand,

/and to co-operate



and to co-operate with IMO on the other hand, and which furnishes services to both aircraft and surface vessels, has been strongly sustained by ICAO since the time of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts.

The North Pacific Regional Air Navigation Meeting of ICAO also made five recommendations concerning the proposed establishment of ocean weather stations in the North Pacific Ocean (MET nos. 6, 7 and 8, and SAR nos. 3 and 5), following the same general pattern as the ocean weather station programme in the North Atlantic.

2. International Telecommunication Union

i. General co-ordination

The Administrative Council of the ITU at its third session (Geneva, September to October 1948) resolved (resolution 113):

- (a) To take note of the report of the Committee of Experts, particularly the conclusions contained in paragraph 21 (co-ordination between specialized agencies), as a minimum guide for the future co-ordination of activities of aviation, shipping, telecommunications and meteorology in regard to safety of life at sea and in the air.
- (b) To instruct the Secretary-General to take such action as may be necessary to carry out the responsibilities which may fall upon the ITU under the recommendations of paragraph 21 above during periods when the Administrative Council is not in session.
- (c) To instruct the Secretary-General to advise ICAO, IMCO and IMO that the Administrative Council has taken note of the report of the Committee of Experts and that the ITU is ready to co-operate with the other organizations in accordance with that report.

ii. Distress and scene of action frequencies

The ITU called an International Administrative Aeronautical Radio Conference, which met in Geneva on 14 May 1948, to assign frequencies in the bands allocated for the aeronautical mobile service in the Radio Regulations (Atlantic City, 1947). Before the meeting, a Preparatory Committee was convened which suggested to the Safety of Life at Sea Conference, then meeting in London, that it was the latter's concern to make recommendations to the Aeronautical Radio Conference concerning suitable frequencies for distress and scene of action to be used by both ships and aircraft.

The Safety of Life at Sea Conference stated in its telegraphic reply:

" . . . the Preparatory Committee of experts on the co-ordination of Safety at Sea and in the Air who recently met

/in London



in London recognized that communications played an important part both in precautionary measures as well as in actual distress incidents and considered that it would be useful if the matter was examined by representatives of the three agencies concerned, namely, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, and the International Telecommunication Union and the necessary co-ordination secured between them. The Committee further suggested that the International Civil Aviation Organization after further consideration of the matter should if it deems this desirable raise the matter of frequencies other than 500 kc/s with the other agencies named above. The International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea feels that having regard to the fact that the allocation of frequencies falls within the field of the International Telecommunication Union and that representatives technically instructed on this matter by the three organizations are not in attendance at this Conference the best course would be for the matter to be dealt with as suggested by the Preparatory Committee of Experts and recommends accordingly."

It will be recalled that the Preparatory Committee of Experts recommended (report, paragraph 21.F) that if in the opinion of one agency a problem relating to safety at or over the sea should arise which was appropriate for a joint meeting, then that agency should propose such a meeting to the other agency or agencies concerned.

The International Administrative Aeronautical Radio Conference, at which ICAO observers were present, recommended that the Administrative Council of the ITU should suggest to ICAO and IMCO "the creation of a small working group composed of experts of the three organizations to study this subject with a view to the formulation of a co-ordinated plan of action which would ensure, in case of distress, the maximum benefit from telecommunication facilities"; and that, in the meantime, on the basis of the provisions of the Radio Regulations, 1947, "ICAO should take the necessary steps within its organization towards formulation of a plan of co-ordination of distress, search and rescue operations".

The ITU Administrative Council, at its third session, took note of the above recommendation (resolution 114) and of the exchange of correspondence between the Preparatory Committee and the Safety of Life at Sea Conference. They instructed the ITU Secretary-General

/ "... to designate,



"... to designate, should he deem it necessary, a qualified expert from among his staff to discuss the matter on behalf of the ITU should ICAO request a conference on the matter and authorize the attendance of this expert at the conference."

3. Provisional Maritime Consultative Council

The Provisional Maritime Consultative Council has not met since the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Experts. In addition, its field, which is the shipping field, has been covered with respect to safety by the Safety of Life at Sea Conference (London, 1948).

4. International Meteorological Organization

At the date when this document was prepared no information as to action by IMO was available to the United Nations Secretariat. Any information subsequently received will be circulated as an addendum to this document.