

4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611

Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

Circular Letter No.4211  
10 July 2020

To: Governments of Chile, China, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden,  
United Kingdom and United States

IMO Member States  
United Nations and its specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Twenty-seventh meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on  
Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue**

1 The Secretary-General wishes to refer to the twenty-seventh meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue, scheduled to take place from Monday, 12 to Friday, 16 October 2020.

2 The Joint Working Group was established in 1993 with the objective of assisting ICAO and IMO in developing provisions regarding new search and rescue techniques and procedures where both aeronautical and maritime interests are involved. The Group is composed of a limited number of both aeronautical and maritime search and rescue experts from Member and Contracting States of IMO and ICAO.

3 Having carefully considered the work required to be finalized at this meeting of the Joint Working Group, in particular, related to draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual which are expected to be endorsed by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), at its eighth session, and approved by the Maritime Safety Committee and ICAO, for inclusion in the 2022 edition of the Manual, the following arrangements have been agreed, in consultation with the IMO and ICAO Secretariats and the Chair of the Group, for the conduct of this meeting:

- .1 submission of documents for the meeting will be organized under three deadlines, as indicated in paragraph 7 below;
- .2 additional working papers might be issued by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, in order to facilitate the considerations;
- .3 information papers and working papers which do not require discussion will be noted in the report;

.4 virtual meeting arrangements, with remote participation only, will be implemented during the week of 12 to 16 October 2020, as indicated in paragraphs 9 and 10 below, to enable discussions and exchange of views on any issues requiring further consideration; and

.5 finalization of the report of the meeting, along with all the annexes, will take place by correspondence, as indicated in paragraphs 13 and 14 below.

4 In deciding on the above arrangements, current limitations and uncertainties due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic were also taken into account.

### **Terms of reference and provisional agenda**

5 The terms of reference and provisional agenda for the twenty-seventh meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group, as approved by NCSR 7 and the ICAO Secretariat, are set out in annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

### **Submission and distribution of documents**

6 Documents for the meeting will be issued in English only. All documentation for the meeting should be submitted in Microsoft Word, using the template available on: <http://portal.icao.int/>. Documents should be submitted via email through the IMO Secretariat using the following email address: [ncsr@imo.org](mailto:ncsr@imo.org)

7 The deadlines for the submission of documents are as follows:

.1 initial submissions should be received by the Secretariat not later than **Friday, 4 September 2020**;

.2 documents commenting on those documents received by 4 September may be submitted up to **Friday, 18 September 2020**; and

.3 documents commenting on those documents received between 4 and 18 September may be submitted up to **Wednesday, 30 September 2020**.

8 Relevant documentation will be made available on IMODOCS (<http://docs.imo.org>), "Meeting Documents", "NCSR Sub-Committee" and finally "ICAO/IMO JWG" (<http://docs.imo.org/Category.aspx?cid=359>) and on the website: <http://portal.icao.int/>. Access to the ICAO website can be obtained by first requesting a username and a password to gain access to the portal and then requesting access to JWGSAR. Contact [ncsr@imo.org](mailto:ncsr@imo.org) or [jwelton@icao.int](mailto:jwelton@icao.int) if difficulties are encountered in accessing the website.

### **Virtual meeting arrangements**

9 The virtual meeting is scheduled to take place on **Monday 12, Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15, October 2020** from **10:00 to 13:00 hours UTC** (11:00 to 14:00 British Summer Time). These working hours have been chosen to accommodate the participation of search and rescue experts from various time zones. No meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, 14 October to allow for work to be progressed in splinter groups, as appropriate.

10 The meeting will be conducted in English without interpretation.

11 The Organization has invited Chile, China, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States each to provide an expert to participate

---

as the IMO Members in the Group. Representatives of other organizations or States may attend the meeting and participate as observers.

12 Other relevant information will be communicated to registered participants in due time.

### Report of the meeting

13 Based on proposals and comments received, as well on the discussions during the virtual meeting, a draft report, along with all the annexes, will be prepared and made available on IMODOCS, not later than **Friday, 23 October 2020**.

14 Written comments on the draft report may be submitted by email to the Secretariat ([ncsr@imo.org](mailto:ncsr@imo.org) and [jwelton@icao.int](mailto:jwelton@icao.int)) until **Friday, 6 November 2020**. After that, a final report will be prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, for submission to the relevant ICAO and IMO bodies.

### Registration

15 Member Governments, United Nations Agencies, IGOs and NGOs are required to provide, not later than **Friday, 18 September 2020**, the names of all the members of their delegations participating in the meeting via the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS), as advised in Circular Letter No.3463 of 14 July 2014. Registered delegations will be included in the final report of the meeting as participating delegations.

16 Delegates submitting documents or comments will need to be registered on OMRS prior to the publication of any submissions made by them.

17 Any matters relating to the use of OMRS should be communicated to:

Registration Unit  
Meeting Services and Interpretation Section  
Email: [onlineregistration@imo.org](mailto:onlineregistration@imo.org)

18 Members of delegations will not be registered for participation in the meeting without authorization from their OMRS Delegation Coordinator.

\*\*\*



## ANNEX 1

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ICAO/IMO JOINT WORKING GROUP ON HARMONIZATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE

1 This Joint Working Group (JWG) is established to develop recommendations and information to support the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue and/or ICAO, as appropriate, on any matters pertinent to harmonization of international maritime and aeronautical search and rescue (SAR).

2 JWG will meet as necessary, subject to approval of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee and ICAO, with meetings supported by the IMO and ICAO Secretariats.

3 Invitations to participate in JWG will be submitted to respective Member and Contracting States by both IMO and ICAO, respectively.

4 Language services will not be provided during JWG meetings.

5 JWG meetings will generally take place annually about midway between meetings of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue.

6 JWG will provide an active interface between IMO and ICAO for harmonization of maritime and aeronautical SAR plans and procedures in accordance with the 1985 memorandum of understanding between IMO and ICAO, and with resolution 1 of the 1979 International Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue.

7 The JWG will review and develop proposals relating to harmonization in various matters including:

- .1 provisions of conventions, plans, manuals and other documents affecting SAR;
- .2 SAR operational principles, procedures and techniques;
- .3 SAR system administration, organization and implementation methods;
- .4 RCC/RSC equipment and facility designations and standards;
- .5 SAR communications; and
- .6 SAR personnel staffing and training.

8 Need for JWG continuation will be reviewed by IMO and ICAO on an ongoing basis; JWG will be discontinued when either organization concludes that the work is no longer cost-effective, and formally informs the other of its decision to discontinue.

9 The guidelines for the conduct of JWG are:

- .1 members are expected to serve as individual SAR experts rather than State representatives;
- .2 JWG has no power to make recommendations to States, nor to any organization other than IMO and ICAO;
- .3 recommendations from JWG are made directly to both organizations; and

- .4 representatives of other organizations or States may attend JWG and participate as observers; however, meeting announcements and documentation relating to JWG will only be distributed to the members, observers invited to attend by the Group and others who request advance notification.

\*\*\*

## ANNEX 2

### PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE ICAO/IMO JOINT WORKING GROUP ON HARMONIZATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE

- 1 Adoption of the agenda**
- 2 Decisions of ICAO and IMO bodies related to the Joint Working Group work, for instance:**
  - *briefing on the outcome of NCSR 7 and MSC 102; and*
  - *briefing on the outcome of ICAO activities.*
- 3 Conventions, plans, manuals and other documents affecting SAR, for instance:**
  - *amendments to the IAMSAR Manual, including changes to facilitate use by training institutions;*
  - *status of the Maritime SAR Convention and annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation;*
  - *alignment of the IMO Area SAR Plans, GMDSS Master Plan and ICAO Regional Air Navigation Plans; and*
  - *progress report on work by ANC and provisions pertaining to airborne carriage of crash alert and signalling equipment.*
- 4 SAR operational principles, procedures and techniques, for instance:**
  - *development of operational guidelines for safe and effective SAR operations, taking account of experience gained from past SAR events;*
  - *mass rescue operations, taking account of experiences gained;*
  - *medical assistance in the context of SAR services;*
  - *effects of measures to enhance maritime and aeronautical security on SAR services, including the implementation of the long-range identification and tracking (LRIT) system;*
  - *development of new and revised procedural strategies for the practical provision of SAR services; and*
  - *development of a structured process to review SAR alerting procedures between ATC services and SAR authorities.*
- 5 SAR system administration, organization and implementation methods, for instance:**
  - *regional SAR development, including SAR committees and task forces;*

- *development of guidance on regulatory provisions and other guidelines for State and subregional SAR organizations;*
- *quality assurance, systems improvement, needs assessment, risk management, safety management and resource allocation; and*
- *evaluating the effect of various technical cooperation projects in conjunction with relevant Governments, organizations and agencies with a view to assessing their impact on implementing and maintenance of effective SAR services.*

**6 RCC/RSC and SAR equipment and facility designations and standards, for instance:**

- *establishment of RCCs and in particular JRCCs;*
- *status of AIS, ADS-B and shore/land-based facilities and systems in aeronautical and maritime SAR; and*
- *SAR equipment, including information technology.*

**7 SAR communications, for instance:**

- *status, elements and procedures of maritime communication systems for distress and SAR, including the GMDSS;*
- *status, elements and procedures of aeronautical communications systems for distress and SAR, including GADSS;*
- *status of the Cospas-Sarsat system, including MEOSAR and development of second-generation beacons; and*
- *monitor trends in SAR communications and provide advice on emerging technologies.*

**8 SAR personnel staffing and training, for instance:**

- *development of RCC staff qualifications and standards; and*
- *development of joint SAR training courses based on the IAMSAR Manual.*

**9 Any other business**

**10 Provisional agenda for JWG 28**

**11 Reports to ICAO and the NCSR Sub-Committee**

---