

**ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS
CONCERNING
THE COORDINATION OF SEARCH AND RESCUE**

The Government of **Papua New Guinea** and the Government of **Solomon Islands**,

RECOGNISING, the great importance of co-operation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue and of the provision of expeditious and effective search and rescue services;

NOTING, provisions of the International Convention on Maritime Search And Rescue 1979, and Convention on International Civil Aviation Organisation, 1944;

FURTHER NOTING the Basic Agreement between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Government of Solomon Islands on border arrangement, namely to cooperate and render assistance in search and rescue operations.

DESIRING, to provide an overall plan for SAR coordination and for effective use of all available SAR facilities and recognizing the value of setting forth basic SAR policies and procedures for SAR operations and for coordination of SAR missions;

BEARING IN MIND that the Arrangement on Standard Operating Procedures on Search And Rescue is required to implement the said understanding.

The **Parties** through their respective Officers have made the following arrangements:

1) IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES.

The recognized agencies responsible for implementing the provisions of this Arrangement are the **National Maritime Safety Authority, Papua New Guinea** and **Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited** for the **Government of Papua New Guinea** and the **Ministry of Transport, Works and Communication, Marine Division** for the **Government of Solomon Islands**.

The term **Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC)** includes the term “**Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)** or **Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC)**, as appropriate. The **RCCs** of the parties covered by these arrangement as as follows:

For Solomon Islands:

For Papua New Guinea

**ARCC (Port Moresby)
PNG Air Services Ltd,
P O Box 273, BOROKO.
ATS Control Tower
Level 1, Tower complex
Jacksons Airport, 7 Mile.
Port Moresby. PNG.**

MRCC (Port Moresby)

2. SCOPE OF THE ARRANGEMENTS.

- 2.1 Either party, on receiving information of any person in distress within its region of responsibility should take urgent measures to provide the most appropriate assistance available regardless of the nationality or status of such a person or the circumstances in which that person is found. Nothing in this Arrangement is intended to obstruct or unnecessarily delay rendering assistance to such persons.
- 2.2 The parties, in conducting their Search and Rescue operations should cooperate with each other when appropriate, and co-ordinate their operations for that purpose, assisting each other as capabilities allow. Should questions ever arise as to which party has primary responsibility for coordinating search and rescue operations under this Arrangement, the party should, as appropriate, consult with a view to resolving the question.
- 2.3 For any search and rescue operations involving both Parties, the Parties should agree in each case, through consultation, which Party will have primary responsibility for coordinating the search and rescue operations.
- 2.4 It is understood that each Party exercises sovereignty over its territories, and that to the greatest extent practicable, sovereignty must be respected. However, it is also recognized that the parties have an international humanitarian obligation to save the lives of persons in distress when possible, and to co-operate with neighbouring countries for that purpose. Therefore, the Parties agree to seek to balance these sometimes conflicting areas of concern in the following manner:
 - 2.4.1 In those unusual circumstances where there is need for entry of SAR units of one Party into or over the territory or territorial seas of the other Party to conduct search operations or to provide non-urgent assistance, permission for such operations shall be requested via **Port Moresby RCC** or **MRCC Honiara** which then, will make the appropriate preparation accordingly.
 - 2.4.2 Solely for the purpose of saving (rescuing) lives in imminent danger or distress, or for rendering urgently needed emergency assistance, and when the location is reasonably well known, SAR Units of one Party may immediately enter into or over the territorial seas or

territories of the other Party, with notification of such entry made to respective **RCC's** as soon as possible. To facilitate co-ordination and execution of such rescue operations, the involved Parties should keep each other fully and promptly apprised of all relevant activities. Whenever time and circumstances permit, permission for entry shall be requested from the party whose territories may be entered.

2.4.3. Any unit receiving information of a distress incident shall take whatever immediate action to assist within its capability or shall alert other units, which might be able to assist, and shall notify the other parties concerned.

2.5 To facilitate the co-ordination and execution of search and rescue operations referred to in this Article, the Parties should keep each other fully and promptly apprised of all relevant search and rescue operations. The Parties should develop procedures and provide appropriate means of communications as necessary to facilitate SAR co-ordination. Communications should normally be by the fastest means available, as well as by confirmatory message via facsimile, the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network (AFTN), or other such means.

2.6 Search and rescue regions of **Port Moresby** and **Solomon Islands** shall be separated by a line connecting the following points.

Lines joining;- **Equator 160 00E, 0450S 160 00E, 0450S 159 00E, 0638S 156 02E, 0641S 156 01.5E, 0651.2S 155 54.6E, 0655.8S 155 42.2E, 0655.7S 15534.8E, 0719S 155 00E, 1200S 15500E, 1400S 155 00E.**

2.7 The establishment of search and rescue regions is intended only to effect an understanding concerning the regions within which each Party accepts primary responsibility for co-ordination of Search and Rescue operations. Delimitation of search and rescue regions is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of boundaries between countries.

2.8 To promote mutual co-operation in search and rescue, the Parties will pay due consideration to collaborative efforts including, but not limited to:

2.8.1. Mutual visits between Search and Rescue personnel;

2.8.2. Conduct of joint Search and Rescue exercises, and of training in Search and Rescue services.

2.8.3. Development of Search and Rescue procedures, techniques, equipment, and facilities consistent with international standards;

2.8.4. Provision of services in support of search and rescue operations such as use of aircraft landing fields, and fuelling or medical facilities; and

- 2.8.5. Support of the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) ship reporting system for search and rescue to enable arrangement of rescues on the high seas.
- 2.8.6. SAR communications tests exercises will be conducted at least once quarterly to assure availability in emergencies.

3. COORDINATION.

- 3.1. The Search and Rescue (SAR) Points of Contact for the **Papua New Guinea Search and Rescue** is the **PNG Air Services Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) for aviation SAR and National Maritime Safety Authority RCC for maritime SAR** The Search and Rescue (SAR) Point Of Contact (SPOC) for **Solomon Islands** is the **Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Honiara**. The parties should keep each other informed about any information such as telephone and facsimile numbers which might help expedite co-ordination.
- 3.2. Identification of the search and rescue points of contact listed above is not intended to preclude appropriate direct co-ordination between search and rescue **Units** or with others involved in search and rescue.
- 3.3. The parties should keep each other informed in a timely and effective manner on search and rescue cases of mutual interest or on cases which could potentially involve the other Party as appropriate.
- 3.4. The Parties should exchange information, in addition to that related to specific search and rescue cases that may serve to improve the effectiveness of search and rescue operations. Such information may include but shall not be limited to, information about search and rescue units, description of available airfields and medical and fuelling facilities, and information useful in training search and rescue personnel.
- 3.5. Nothing in this Arrangement shall affect in any way rights and obligations resulting from international agreements or under international law.
- 3.6. The provisions of this Arrangement are contingent upon availability of search and rescue personnel, facilities and funding.
- 3.7. Unless otherwise agreed by the Parties, each Party will fund its own expenses for facilities pertinent to the Agreement.

4. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES.

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

In application of the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and Rescue (SAR) services of neighbouring States, the SAR services of **Papua New Guinea** and **Solomon Islands** undertake to provide mutual assistance, one to the

other, in the manner specified below upon receipt at one of the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCC) of one State, of a request for such aid from one of the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCC) of the other State for;

- 4.1.1. assistance in the conduct of a Search and Rescue operations in its Search and Rescue Region (SRR);
- 4.1.2. approval for one of its SAR units to use facilities in the other's SRR while engaged on a SAR mission; or
- 4.1.3. approval for entry of SAR Units and personnel into the SRR of the other State for the purpose of rendering SAR assistance.

4.2. EXTENT OF ASSISTANCE.

When requested by an **RCC**, the **RCC** to which the request is addressed will, when circumstances permit, make available to the requesting centre as required, such assistance including suitable SAR units and personnel or equipment needed for search and rescue operations in the SRR of the requesting centre, with the objective of bringing speedy relief to persons in distress irrespective of nationality.

TERMS OF ARRANGEMENT.

- 4.3.1. The requesting Centre, when making a request for aid, will provide all pertinent facts on the scope of the aid required and need for it.
- 4.3.2. The Centre to which the request is directed will, when circumstances permit, assign as soon as possible, SAR units, personnel or equipment as required to the requesting Centre for designated periods and will advise the requesting Centre accordingly.
- 4.3.3. Whenever possible the requesting Centre, on being advised of available SAR Units, will allocate an enroute search area and advise the dispatching Centre of briefing instructions for SAR operations.
- 4.3.4. Before dispatch of SAR Units the requesting Centre will be notified of the particulars of the units and will be responsible for providing suitable instructions before it enters the SRR of the requesting Centre.
- 4.3.5. The requesting Centre will assign the SAR units an appropriate forward field base from which to operate for debriefing purpose or if required, for further operations.
- 4.3.6. During the period or duration of the allocation of a SAR unit, the Pilot-in-Command or in the case of a maritime vessel, the Master, will place himself, crew at the disposal of the

requesting Centre, subject only to considerations relating to the safety of the SAR unit and personnel.

5. SPECIAL PROVISIONS.

5.1. Entry.

5.1.1. The requesting **RCC** will make the necessary arrangements with the appropriate Customs, immigration or other authorities with the view to expediting the entry of SAR Units, personnel or equipment as may be needed.

5.1.2. Any necessary restrictions on route or entry points will be advised to the Centre dispatching the SAR Units.

Details of SAR units and personnel including;

- Registration Number of SRU (Search and Rescue unit),
- Type of SRU,
- Pilot in Command,
- Name of Crews,
- Area of Operations,

Shall be provided to the requesting RCC for information.

5.2. Stopovers.

5.2.1. Each party will be responsible for expenses incurred by its own SAR units deployed during a SAR mission.

- ◆ utilization of designated aerodromes and their equipment;
- ◆ fuelling, servicing and handling; and
- ◆ Accommodation, transportation and provision for crew members, and such other personnel as may be needed to assist in the conduct of the Search and Rescue action.

5.3. Survival Equipment

5.3.1. The recovery of re-usable supplies and survival equipment is the responsibility of the requesting Centre. This responsibility may be delegated to the Officer-in-Charge of the SAR unit. Recovered items will be returned to the authority which originally provided them unless other arrangements for their disposal have been specifically agreed to.

5.4 Reports.

Two copies of reports in English of SAR operations in which an adjacent State is concerned shall be forwarded to the authority responsible for SAR services in that State.

6. JOINT SAR OPERATIONS.

When the probability areas for a Search and Rescue Operations covers portions of two or more SRRs under the jurisdictions of the separate State:

- a the **RCC** first becoming aware of the need for SAR action will initially undertake the coordination of the operations and will notify other RCCs concerned;

- b after plotting the probability areas, and assessing the most suitable bases of the operations of SAR Units, **RCC** concerned will review the situation to reach agreement as to which is better placed to handle the coordination of the whole operation, and if appropriate, on the extent of delegation of responsibility for separate areas to the other **RCCs** concerned;
- c **RCCs** concerned in the operation will exchange situation reports (SITREPs) at 12 hourly intervals.

7. USE OF BASES IN ADJACENT STATES.

When so requested by an **RCC**, the Centre receiving the request will make suitable arrangements for SAR Units to use such bases in its SRR as may be necessary for a particular SAR operation together with necessary refueling, servicing and other facilities required.

8. SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN.

The authorities responsible for search and rescue in the adjacent states will provide each other with sufficient copies of their SAR plans for use in the Rescue Coordination Centre of adjoining Search and Rescue Regions.

9. EXERCISES.

The Rescue Coordination Centre of adjoining Search and Rescue Regions will arrange and conduct joint exercises from time to time for training purposes and for verification or improvement of procedures.

10. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SAR AUTHORITIES.

The authorities at the various levels responsible for Search and Rescue in each State are authorised to communicate directly with each other, within the framework of this agreement on common search and rescue matters such as;

- a during an actual search and rescue operations, the Search and Rescue Mission Coordination (SMC) in adjacent RCCs require to communicate directly by radio link, facsimile, telephone, Email and Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network (AFTN);
- b in arranging exercises or discussing detailed SAR plans the Supervisors in charge of RCCs need to communicate directly with each other;
- c coordinating national SAR plans, particularly in the implementation of international agreements, the national SAR authorities need to communicate directly; and

- d communications between Chief Officers of adjacent areas relating to SAR policy matters;
- e each Rescue Coordination Centre in each state shall furnish to one another, appropriate contact numbers for direct communications.

11. AMENDMENTS

This Arrangement may be amended by the Parties through consultations and negotiations.

12. ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TERMINATION.

- 1. This Arrangement shall come into force on the date of its signing by the respective Parties.
- 2. This Arrangement may be terminated at any time by mutual consent or by either Party upon giving 90 days notice in writing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorised by their respective Governments, have signed this Arrangement.

Done in duplicate, at (City) on the (date) of (month), (year), in the year *Two Thousand and*
and

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT
OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

.....
(Official's Name)

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT
OF SOLOMON ISLANDS.**

.....
(Official's Name)