

Focus on... Raising ATM Performance in the Middle East

Since the establishment of the CANSO Middle East Region in June 2009 (see Airspace 6 Q3 2009) the Association has been focused on creating a vision, strategy and programme for tackling ANSP concerns in the region. Aviation stakeholders were given the first sight of this work at CANSO's 2nd Middle East ANSP Conference in Dubai, January 25-27, created to help aviation leaders in the region identify common solutions to regional challenges.

The Conference was preceded by a High Level Meeting of senior industry representatives. This meeting endorsed the REDSEA (Realise, Enhance and Develop Seamless Efficient Airspace) vision and work programme of the Middle East CANSO CEO Committee (MEC3). In the CANSO 'Middle East Declaration' (see news page 4), HLM representatives committed to work together to achieve REDSEA through a package of work programmes designed to provide direction and structure to the region's collaborative efforts.

Commenting on the release of the Declaration, CANSO's Director Business Transformation Gudrun Held was clear on its importance for aviation in the region; "With a clear vision and a strategy for achieving it in place,

Middle East aviation stakeholders can look forward to making real progress in improving ATM in their region" she said. A press conference on 26th January, held to promote the Declaration, attracted significant Middle East media interest, with MEC3 Chairman H.E. Al-Rehaimi, CANSO Chairman Ashley Smout, Director General Graham Lake, and Captain Alan Stealey of Emirates giving their views.

Asked why the Middle East Declaration and the CANSO work programme was so important, His Excellency M.N. Al-Rehaimi argued "It is imperative that the Middle East is on a par with other regions for greater global connectivity," and added that "The ultimate goal is to activate a single sky policy in the region."

ANSP Conference: Bringing together Middle East Aviation

The Middle East aviation community was well represented at the CANSO Conference, with contributions from Ahmed Said Abdalla (NANSC Egypt) H.E. Abdullah M.N. Al-Rehaimi (GACA Saudi Arabia) Dr. Wafik Hasan (CAA Syria) Mohammed Amin Ahmoud Al Mustafa (CARC Jordan) and Ahmed Namet Ali (Bahrain CAA) and David McMillan (Eurocontrol). Several other leading ANSPs, IATA, ICAO, and IFATCA also participated in the conference proceedings.

In his opening address, CANSO Chairman Ashley Smout congratulated participants for agreeing on a shared vision and a high level strategy. "For the first time," he said, "the aviation industry in the Middle East is working together to increase airspace efficiency, help airlines cut fuel use, reduce carbon emissions and save on costs, and ultimately improve safety for all users".

Reminding delegates of the scale of the challenge they face, Mohamed R.M. Khonji, Regional Director of ICAO's Middle East Office observed that Middle East aviation is predicted to grow at an annual average rate of 8.2%, while Gunnar Emausson, Acting Director Safety, Operations & Infrastructure, IATA Middle East pointed to a ASK growth rate of 15.9% for November 2009 vs. November 2008.

Against this backdrop, Conference Sessions and Workshops focused on discussing priority issues as agreed by regional stakeholders at the Association's first Middle East

Conference in 2009: institutional transformation, performance-based ANSP management and operational cooperation, and workshops on Safety, Airspace and CNS/ATM Infrastructure.

The key points will be taken forward and used as a basis for future discussion and the development of Work Programmes for each of the four Middle East Workgroups, which will focus on one or more of the seven pillars outlined in the High Level Strategy (see diagram).

Safety

Participants identified several requirements for improving safety in the Middle East. Among them, Greater Civil-Military collaboration, the uptake of 'Just Culture', Voluntary Reporting, Safety Management Systems, a relationship between QMS/SMS, Internal Oversight of safety management, setting safety targets, and Lesson Learning.

Recognising that CANSO's Global Safety Workgroup is working on addressing many of these areas, participants agreed that taking part in CANSO's Safety activities could help promote safety in the region. They also noted the importance of involving of IATA, ACAC, ICAO, Eurocontrol and the FAA in safety-related activities.

Airspace Planning

With its fast growing markets and ambitious vision for economic growth, the Middle East needs a high capacity transport infrastructure. However, participants widely acknowledged that current capacity limitations are restricting growth and Captain Alan Stealey, Div. Senior Vice President of Emirates, presenting the airline perspective, shared this view.

Recognising the need to increase capacity while maintaining a high level of safety, participants outlined clear objectives for improving airspace planning, while maintaining the provision of safety. They suggested that regional capacity could be increased through greater civil-military cooperation, the harmonisation of existing operations and implementation processes, enhanced collaborative information exchange between ATM Stakeholders, and better coordination between regional projects and a global

How the High-Level Strategy Pillars feed into the Middle East Workgroups



strategy. They also noted two initiatives for optimising the current airspace structure: IATA's Route Efficiency Project over the gulf and north of the Arabian peninsula, and KSA & UAE Empty Quarter Routes.

During the Airspace planning Workshop participants suggested short-term 'quick-win' aims which could be achieved before the end of 2012, such as the completion of a regional airspace study, the implementation of Flexible Use of Airspace, and improved civil-military coordination. Looking further, the group suggested that by 2015 radar spacing between FIRs should be reduced to 20nm.

CNS/ATM Infrastructure

On the subject of CNS/ATM Infrastructure, it was suggested that an ACAC CNS/ATM Study or inventory of CNS/ATM systems from Members would be a useful starting point or baseline, and this could feed into the implementation of a robust Air Navigation Plan (CNS/ATM strategy). The importance of aeronautical information was also highlighted, and several suggested that additional work is needed to provide clarity for supporting activities or projects on the transition from AIS to AIM.

Strategic Cooperation

The benefits of separating regulation from service provision was widely understood and agreed. Participants noted that under such circumstances,

states are more able to focus on their role as regulator, owner and supervisor, while ANSPs are better able to concentrate on the provision of safe, efficient and cost effective services.

His Excellency M.N. Al-Rehaimi shared this view. Speaking to local media, he explained that the improvement of ATM relies heavily on the separation of service provision and regulation: "Greater corporatisation in the region's aviation industry is imperative. Performances can't be measured in government departments due to a lack of transparency and regional bodies are not known to be too flexible" he noted.

CANSO's Role in the Middle East

Throughout the conference discussions, speakers acknowledged CANSO's role in bringing together leaders and experts to exchange their views, knowledge and experience in a neutral environment, and the value of a shared industry vision.

Closing the Conference, Graham Lake said: "Middle East aviation stakeholders are determined to overcome common challenges and the Vision and Strategy marks a new era in regional collaboration. With the support of the CANSO Middle East Regional Office and future events, I am convinced we will see significant progress within three years."

CANSO will hold its 3rd Middle East Conference in January 2011. ➔



The Middle East CANSO CEO Committee (MEC3) has formulated a Vision and Strategy for the region.