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OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE
INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Mr. Staffan de Mistura
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

DATE: 24 August 2011

REFERENCE: IAD: 11- **00531**

FROM: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Director
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2011/630/06 – Audit of aviation safety in UNAMA**
OBJET:

Overall results relating to risk management and strategic planning were partially satisfactory

1.   Attached please find the report on the above-mentioned audit.

2.   In order for us to close the recommendations, we request that you provide the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and summarized in Annex 1.

3.   We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNAMA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

cc: Ms. Stephani Scheer, Chief of Mission Support, UNAMA
Mr. Peter Schmitz, Chief of Staff, UNAMA
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Ms. Susanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit
Mr. Moses Bamuwamye, Executive Secretary, IAAC
Mr. Seth Adza, Chief, Audit Response Team, DFS
Mr. Zachary Ikiara, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, DM
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS
Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service, OIOS
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Officer, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

AUDIT REPORT
Audit of aviation safety in UNAMA

BACKGROUND

Management of aviation safety programmes in field missions involves the identification of aviation hazards, evaluation of associated risks and implementation of appropriate risk mitigation measures. In the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the Aviation Safety Unit (ASU) is responsible for the development and implementation of the aviation safety programme in line with policies established by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS). ASU is part of the Office of Mission Support under the purview of the Chief of Mission Support (CMS). The Head of ASU also has a reporting line to the Aviation Safety Section of the Logistics Support Division of DFS on technical matters. The Aviation Safety Section is responsible to provide technical support and regular oversight of the aviation safety programme in the Mission.

As of 30 April 2011, UNAMA had five fixed-wing aircraft and six rotary-wing aircraft. ASU had three authorized posts.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNAMA's risk management, control and governance processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the effective implementation and management of its aviation safety programme. The key controls tested for the audit included those related to risk management and strategic planning. The audit covered UNAMA's activities related to this key control for the period 1 May 2009 to 30 April 2011.

AUDIT RESULTS

In OIOS' opinion, UNAMA's risk management, control and governance processes examined were **partially satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance regarding the effective implementation and management of its aviation safety programme. There were some unmitigated risks resulting from the non-implementation of recommendations made by DFS' Aviation Safety Assistance Visit (ASAV) and the partial implementation of the aviation Operational Risk Management (ORM) Framework promulgated by DFS.

Meetings of the Mission Aviation Safety Council

The Mission's Aviation Safety Council (MASC) did not meet quarterly as required, but the frequency of meetings increased in 2010/11. The lack of quarterly meetings was attributed to the prevailing unstable security situation in Afghanistan, which limited the movement of staff between offices and rest and recuperation cycle, which made it difficult to achieve a quorum at meetings. As a mitigating measure, the CMS held weekly meetings with the Aviation Safety Officer to discuss urgent aviation safety issues including; for example, survey of hazards, status of implementation of previous recommendations, and current aviation safety issues.

Implementation of recommendations made by the Aviation Safety Assistance Visit

ASAV conducted by DFS in April 2010 made 17 recommendations to enhance aviation safety measures. As of May 2011, 6 of the 17 recommendations were still outstanding or only partially implemented. The six recommendations called for: (a) making cargo screening equipment more effective;

(b) finalizing Movement Control standard operating procedures; (c) addressing the congested parking space for aircraft at the air terminal; and (d) filling position of the Chief of ASU which had been vacant since 2009. Actions were being taken by UNAMA in respect of these recommendations.

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(1) UNAMA should fill the post of Chief Aviation Safety Officer to enable it to strengthen its aviation safety programme.

UNAMA partially accepted recommendation 1 noting that due to the present adverse security environment, it was focusing on reducing the number of international staff in Afghanistan and that ASU had an experienced aviation safety specialist. Additionally, UNAMA stated that it might adjust the staffing level of ASU if the recently concluded ASAV by DFS recommends that the post be filled. DFS' report had not yet been received. Moreover, the Mission will continue to consult with DFS to review the staffing levels of ASU and carry out an evaluation to establish whether ASU is capable of maintaining its aviation safety programme. Recommendation 1 remains open pending confirmation that a review of the staffing requirements of ASU has been conducted with the assistance of DFS and appropriate action is taken to ensure that there are sufficient resources to implement aviation risk-mitigating measures.

Operational risk management framework

The Mission was only partially compliant regarding the implementation of ORM. Only three of the six ORM steps had been integrated into aviation activities. Other steps such as the requirement for evaluation of risks, analysis of risk mitigation measures and risk decisions were still pending. The Mission recognized the need for full implementation of ORM, an required further training and guidance.

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(2) UNAMA should seek further guidance and support from DFS on the implementation of ORM policy and ensure that key staff involved in aviation safety management are trained in compliance with the Aviation Safety Manual to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it had established and implemented ORM procedures since 2009, was receiving guidance from DFS, and will continue to work closely with them in order to further enhance its ORM actions and policies and train staff involved in aviation safety management. Recommendation 2 remains open pending confirmation of the full implementation of ORM policy and training of key staff involved in aviation safety management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNAMA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE

2.   The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNAMA's risk management, control and governance processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the effective implementation and management of its aviation safety programme. The key controls tested for the audit included those related to risk management and strategic planning. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined risk management and strategic planning as the control designed to provide reasonable assurance that risks relating to UNAMA aviation safety programme are identified and assessed, and that action is taken to mitigate identified risks.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.   OIOS conducted this audit in May 2011 in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing promulgated by The Institute of Internal Auditors. The audit covered UNAMA's aviation safety activities related to the key control for the period from May 2009 to 30 April 2011. The audit did not cover the planning and organization of aviation operations and aviation safety briefings and trainings. In addition, field visits were not conducted to verify/observe maintenance and rehabilitation of airports and airfields.

4.   To gain a general understanding of the processes of UNAMA's risk management and strategic planning of its aviation safety programme, OIOS interviewed the Chief of Mission Support (CMS), the Mission Aviation Safety Officer, the Chief Aviation Officer, and the Chief of UNAMA Airport Terminal and Aviation Technical Compliance Officer. OIOS reviewed the draft Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) Aviation Safety Manual (ASM), the policy directive on aviation Operational Risk Management (ORM) and other documentation including aviation safety risk assessment indicators, minutes of the Mission Aviation Safety Council (MASC) meetings, the Mission's Aviation Emergency Response Plan (AERP), and reports of Aviation Safety Assistance Visits (ASAV) made by DFS. The audit team conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and evaluate specific risk exposures, and to determine whether controls existed to mitigate such risks. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of written policies and procedures, and also whether they were implemented consistently.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

5.   In OIOS' opinion, UNAMA's risk management, control and governance processes examined were **partially satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance regarding the effective implementation and management of its air safety programme. There were some unmitigated risks resulting from the non-implementation of recommendations made by DFS' ASAV and the partial implementation of the aviation ORM Framework promulgated by DFS.

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V. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Risk management and strategic planning

The Mission Aviation Safety Council did not meet as regularly as required

6.   From May 2009, when ASU was established, to 30 April 2011, MASC met four times (i.e., 17 August 2009, 4 July 2010, 26 October 2010 and 16 February 2011) compared to the minimum requirement of seven meetings as per the draft ASM. The frequency and number of meetings increased in 2010/11. The lack of quarterly meetings was attributed to the prevailing unstable security situation in Afghanistan, which limited the movement of staff between offices and rest and recuperation cycle, which made it difficult to achieve a quorum at meetings. The office of the CMS, which was supposed to attend the meetings of MASC was at a different location than that of the Mission Aviation Safety Officer (MASO). As a mitigating measure, the CMS held weekly meetings with MASO to discuss urgent aviation safety issues including; for example, survey of hazards, status of implementation of previous recommendations, and current aviation safety issues.

7.   At the time of the audit, 7 of the 16 recommendations of the MASC had been outstanding for long periods, some for nearly two years.   The ASAV Team from DFS had made similar recommendations. These recommendations called for the installation of the software for X-ray scanners, development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the Movement Control Unit (MovCon), ensuring adequate staff with certification on the handling of dangerous goods, and enlarging the parking space for aircraft at the air terminal. OIOS was informed that:

> (a)   UNAMA passenger luggage and cargo screening was done in the terminal building at Kabul International Airport. However, the larger X-ray machine needed for screening cargo, while it was powered and operational, still needed certain software to make it fully effective. The Mission is following-up on obtaining the necessary software from the supplier.

> (b)   The MovCon SOPs were drafted and approved by the CMS in late December 2010, but they had not been released, as further amendments regarding customs clearance were still required. An annual training certification programme on dangerous goods was planned for July 2011.

> (c)   Support from the Government of Afghanistan was needed to extend available apron space to park UNAMA's aircraft. As a mitigating measure, UNAMA was taking all necessary safety precautions on the use of the limited apron space available to them.

Recommendations from Aviation Safety Assistance Visits need to be implemented

8.   ASAV is an oversight mechanism used by DFS for aviation safety programmes in field missions. It provides a detailed assessment of factors influencing aviation safety management in the Missions and forms the basis for recommendations, and risk mitigation measures aimed at enhancing the level of safety in air operations.

9.   During the audit period, DFS made one ASAV to the Mission from 8 to 13 April 2010. As of May 2011, 6 of the 17 recommendations of the ASAV were still outstanding and/or partially

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implemented. These recommendations mainly related to the above-mentioned issues (see paragraph 7) identified by MASC and the staffing of the ASU.

10.   The position of the Chief of ASU had been vacant since 2009, as initially there were difficulties in recruiting an aviation specialist. Also, more recently, the Mission was of the view that this additional post would not necessarily strengthen its aviation safety programme.   Therefore, the Mission has proposed the deployment of the post of Chief, ASU to the Welfare Unit in the 2012 budget proposal.

Recommendation 1

(1)   UNAMA should fill the post of Chief Aviation Safety Officer to strengthen its aviation safety programme.

11.   *UNAMA partially accepted recommendation 1 noting that due to the present adverse security environment, it was focusing on reducing the number of international staff in Afghanistan and that ASU had an experienced aviation safety specialist. Additionally, UNAMA stated that it might adjust the staffing level of ASU if the recently concluded aviation safety visit of DFS recommends that the post be filled. DFS' report has not yet been received. Moreover, the Mission will continue to consult with DFS to review the staffing levels of ASU and carry out an evaluation to establish whether ASU is capable of maintaining its aviation safety programme.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending confirmation that a review of the staffing requirements of ASU has been conducted with the assistance of DFS and appropriate action is taken to ensure that there are sufficient resources to implement aviation risk-mitigating measures.

Additional work is necessary to fully implement aviation Operational Risk Management

12.   The draft ASM provides the risk management framework for aviation safety operations and includes accident prevention methodology, assessment of the types of hazards, related risks and risk mitigating measures. The implementation of the aviation ORM policy is an integral part of the aviation risk management framework and entails a decision-making process to address risks associated with aviation operations.

13.   The Mission was only partially compliant regarding the implementation of ORM. Only three of the six ORM steps had been integrated into all aviation related activities.   Other steps such as the requirement for evaluation of risks, analysis of risk mitigation measures and risk decisions as provided for in the aviation ORM policy were still pending. This was attributed to the lack of capacity in the Mission and awareness by Management and staff members involved in the aviation safety programme.

14.   The Mission recognized the need for full implementation of ORM. However, considering that ORM scope is broad, complex and technical, its full implementation will take time. In UNAMA's opinion, DFS needs to provide more detailed guidance and assistance on the aviation ORM process. While the policy directive on ORM includes terms of reference and descriptions of the duties and functions of staff, it lacks sufficient guidance such as checklists on its implementation. For example, a checklist to ensure the integration of ORM in all relevant areas was required for the planning phase of aviation programme.

Recommendation 2

(2)   UNAMA should seek further guidance and support from the Department of Field Support on the implementation of the aviation Operational Risk Management policy and ensure that key staff involved in aviation safety management are trained in compliance with the Aviation Safety Manual to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively.

15.   *UNAMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it had established and implemented ORM procedures since 2009, it was receiving guidance from DFS, and will continue to work closely with DFS in order to further enhance aviation ORM actions and policies and train staff involved in aviation safety management.* Recommendation 2 remains open pending confirmation of the full implementation of ORM policy and training of key staff involved in aviation safety management.

Aviation safety reporting was done in a timely manner

16.   According to the draft ASM, reporting of occurrences and hazards is mandatory. As required, UNAMA was preparing quarterly risk indicators and submitting them to DFS in a timely manner.

Aviation Emergency Response Plan was up-to-date, but could not be tested due to Government restrictions

17.   According to the ASM, an AERP provides the basis for a systemic approach to manage the Mission's affairs in the aftermath of events such as aircraft accident. In addition, AERP exercises should be conducted on a regular basis to test the validity of the plan, identify areas of concern, and to ensure that all personnel are prepared for prompt actions in case of an aviation emergency.

18.   The Mission had not conducted a full drill due to limited access of the Mission at the Kabul airport and Government restrictions limiting its ability to conduct a full-scale exercise. However, in 2010, the Mission conducted a desktop exercise and a search and rescue drill to ensure that concerned personnel were prepared to handle aviation emergencies. During the AERP exercise, UNAMA identified some participants that had not been included in the AERP checklist, and contact numbers of key persons were not included, but this was later provided. As a result of the desktop exercise, the AERP was updated in December 2010.

ANNEX 1

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O[1]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[2]
1	UNAMA should fill the post of Chief Aviation Safety Officer to enable it to strengthen its aviation safety programme.	Compliance	Important (Medium)	O	Confirmation that a review of the staffing needs of the Aviation Safety Unit has been conducted with the assistance of the DFS and appropriate action taken to ensure that there are sufficient resources to implement risk-mitigating measures.	Not provided
2	UNAMA should seek further guidance and support from the Department of Field Support on the implementation of the aviation Operational Risk Management policy and ensure that key staff involved in aviation safety management are trained in compliance with the Aviation Safety Manual to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively.	Compliance	Important (Medium)	O	Confirmation of the full implementation of ORM policy and training of key staff involved in aviation safety management.	December 2011

1. C = closed, O = open
2. Date provided by UNAMA in response to recommendations.