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Our Reference: AIC 16-R12/16-1002

Safety recommendation: AIC 16-R12/16-1002

Addressed to: PNG Air Services Limited

Date issued: 8 December 2016

Investigation link: AIC 16-1002

Action status: Issued

Safety deficiency description

A BN-2T Islander aircraft, registered P2-SBC (SBC) was on a charter flight from Tekin to Kiunga¹, with 12 persons on board. At 14:31 local (04:31 UTC), SBC arrived at Kiunga Aerodrome and the pilot cancelled SARWATCH. During the final approach, approximately 1,200 metres from the threshold of runway 07, the aircraft was observed to pitch up steeply and roll to the right, then descend in a steep nose-down attitude. The aircraft impacted the ground almost vertically.

The aircraft's centre of gravity was significantly aft of the aft limit. When landing flap was set, full nose-down elevator and elevator trim was likely to have had no effect in lowering the nose of the aircraft. Unless the flaps had been retracted immediately, the nose-up pitch may also have resulted in tail-plane stall, exacerbating the pitch up. The wings stalled, followed immediately by the right wing dropping. Recovery from the stall at such a low height was not considered possible.

All communications between Air Traffic Services (ATS) and the pilot of SBC were recorded by ground based automatic voice recording equipment for the duration of the flight. All the High Frequency radio transmissions between ATS and SBC were significantly affected by static interference and a lot of hash, making reception difficult. The ATS officer reported that SBS reported departing Oksapsim for Kiunga. The ATS flight strips also showed that the aircraft reported departing Oksapmin for Kiunga.

While not causal to the accident, the High Frequency radio transmissions being significantly affected by static interference and a lot of hash, making reception difficult, and many transmissions unclear and unreadable is a safety concern to be addressed to ensure that vital operational radio transmissions are not missed for the safety of aircraft operations, and the travelling public. Accordingly the AIC issued Recommendation AIC 16-R12/16-1002.

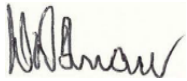
¹ The radio flight plan and the ATS flight strip, and information from the ATS officer communicating with SBC for the duration of the flight, revealed that although SBC departed from Tekin, the pilot reported departing from Oksapmin.

Recommendation number AIC 16-R12/16-1002 to PNG Air Services Ltd

The Accident Investigation Commission recommends that PNG Air Services Limited, should take action to improve High Frequency radio capability to ensure, as much as possible, that transmissions are clear and readable so vital transmissions for the safety of aircraft operations are not missed.

Action requested

The AIC requests that PNG Air Services Limited (ASL) note recommendation AIC 16-R12/16-1002 above, and provide a response to the AIC to Alan Stray, PSM, Manager – Operations Investigation astray@aic.gov.pg) within 90 days of the issue date (8 March 2017), and explain (including with evidence) how ASL has addressed, or plans to address, the safety deficiency identified in the AIC investigation report AIC 16-1002.



DAVID INAU, ML

Chief Executive Officer

8 December 2016

PNG Air Services Limited response

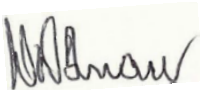
On 10 February 2017, PNG Air Services Limited informed the Accident Investigation Commission of its safety action to address the AIC’s safety concerns, as follows:

HF IMPROVEMENT – SAFETY ACTION STATEMENT

PNG Air Services Ltd has embarked on a holistic program of activities to greatly enhance HF Communications. In the short term, this has involved power system upgrades and related improvements at the Receiver site at 8 mile, Port Moresby. This has realized a recent marked improvement in HF performance. A project is underway to deploy and commission duplicated Transmitter and Receiver systems located at Nadzab Airport, Lae. These systems will be controlled, operated and monitored from Port Moresby through redundant satellite and terrestrial links. It is expected that on completion in 2018, these systems will enable clear and uninterrupted HF Communications throughout the Port Moresby Flight Information Region.

PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) assessment of the PNG Air Services Limited response

On 10 February 2017 the AIC assessed the PNG Air Services Limited response as satisfactorily addressing the identified safety deficiency. Because the PNG ASL program to enhance HF Communication throughout the Port Moresby Flight Information Region is not expected to be completed until 2018, PNG ASL advised that it will inform the AIC when the project has been completed. With respect to AIC 16-R12/16-1002 addressed to PNG Air Services Ltd; **Status of the AIC Recommendation: Monitor**



DAVID INAU, ML

Chief Executive Officer

13 February 2017