



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

First Meeting (DGCA-MID/1)
(Abu Dhabi, UAE, 22-24 March 2011)

Agenda Item 5: Aviation Safety Issues

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLANNING FOR THE AVIATION SECTOR

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

The Cooperative Arrangement for the Prevention of the Spread of Communicable disease through Air travel (CAPSCA) project commenced in 2006, in response to a possible pandemic of avian influenza. This paper will discuss the role of the CAPSCA project in the prevention and management of the risk of the spread, through air travel, of communicable disease of serious public health concern.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

- A37-WP/58 & Assembly Resolutions A37/13
- ICAO Guidelines for States
- World Health Organization (WHO) International Health Regulations (2005)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO's efforts in planning for public health emergencies of international concern intensified when SARS broke out in 2003. Subsequently, in 2006, the Cooperative Arrangement for the Prevention of the Spread of Communicable disease through Air travel (CAPSCA) project was launched in response to the prospect of a possible Avian Influenza pandemic.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Air travel is the primary mode of the spread of communicable diseases such as SARS and Influenza H1N1. Public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC) of this type can occur in any part of the world and spread rapidly across the globe with no respect to boundaries or borders. The aviation sector is also invariably the first to be affected by such PHEICs and thus, of necessity, the aviation sector's response to such outbreaks has to be coordinated and harmonized in a timely manner.

2.2 The CAPSCA project is the only project of its kind in the world that is attempting to make this goal a reality. The Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic was fortunately mild but the measures put in place by many States and Administrations at the points of entry (especially airports) were not commensurate with the severity of the pandemic. In many instances, this was due to differences between the aviation and public health sectors.

2.3 The aim of the CAPSCA project is to bring all stakeholders together, especially the aviation and public health sectors, to facilitate collaboration in the development and implementation of relevant ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and associated Procedures and Guidance material. In addition, implementation of the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) at Points of Entry, in particular at international airports, is an important goal of CAPSCA.

2.4 At the international level, the CAPSCA project being an ICAO project works with the WHO and its regional offices, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN World Tourism Organization. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Airports Council International (ACI) have been partners of CAPSCA from its inception.

2.5 The project facilitates training of regional, national, local government and non-government staff by means of workshops and seminars, and it provides assistance visits to States to help with the implementation of ICAO provisions and the IHR (2005). Such assistance includes evaluations of preparedness at international airports

2.6 CAPSCA commenced in the Asia Pacific region in 2006 and has subsequently spread its wings to Africa (2007) and the Americas (2009). In 2011, it will commence work in the Middle East. The first work shop in the Middle East was planned to be held at the ICAO Middle East Regional Office in Cairo from 20 to 23 February, but postponed due to the events in Egypt. The plan is to have a Global CAPSCA with harmonized pandemic preparedness planning and implementation within the global aviation network for any public health emergency of international concern.

2.7 Based on the experience of Asia Pacific and Americas the CAPSCA project has proven to be a good platform for effective and realistic preparedness planning and implementation towards a public health emergency of international concern. At the 37th ICAO General Assembly, the project was discussed and Resolution A37-13 was adopted by the assembly. The Resolution urges:

1. *Contracting States to ensure that the public health sector and the aviation sector collaborate to develop a national preparedness plan for aviation which addresses public health emergencies of international concern and which is integrated with the general national preparedness plan and;*
2. *Contracting States to involve stakeholders such as airport and aircraft operators in the development of a national preparedness plan for aviation;*
3. *Contracting States to develop a national preparedness plan for aviation that is in compliance with the World Health Organization International Health Regulations (2005) and which are based on scientific principles and on the guidelines from ICAO and the World Health Organization; and*
4. *Contracting States to join and participate in the CAPSCA project, where available, to ensure that its goals are achieved.*

2.8 The possibility of another pandemic remains very real. When, where and which infective agent cannot be predicted. What remains a certainty is that the aviation sector will be involved and will be the first to be affected. Preparedness planning remains key issue for the aviation sector to combat another pandemic. The CAPSCA project especially in its proposed Global format can achieve this goal.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the objectives of CAPSCA;
- b) support and implement ICAO General Assembly Resolution A37-13; and
- c) urge MID States/Administrations to attend CAPSCA activities and join the project.

- END -