



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

A35-WP/12
EC/4
19/5/04

ASSEMBLY — 35TH SESSION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Agenda Item 29: Facilitation

REPORT BY THE COUNCIL ON PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION A33-18: PREVENTING THE INTRODUCTION OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

SUMMARY

This paper presents the results of a survey on the transport of invasive alien species by air and recommends action that might be taken towards development of measures to prevent such transport.

Action by the Assembly is in paragraph 6.

REFERENCES

Doc 9798, A33-EC
Doc 9790, *Assembly Resolutions in Force*
State letter EC 6/21-02/78 dated 30 August 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its 33rd Session, the Assembly adopted Resolution A33-18, “*Preventing the introduction of invasive alien species*” which, *inter alia*, urged Contracting States to support one another’s efforts to reduce the risk of introducing, through civil air transportation, potentially invasive alien species to areas outside their natural range and requested the ICAO Council to continue to work with the appropriate concerned organizations to identify approaches that ICAO might take in assisting States in this matter.

1.2 The Assembly agreed that the Secretariat should conduct a survey on the pathway assessment of the transport of invasive alien species (IAS) by air, answers to which would allow the Organization to determine: a) whether international civil aviation is a significant and/or a high-risk pathway for the unintentional introduction of invasive alien species; and b) whether a strategy for prevention of unintentional introductions of invasive alien species via international civil aviation should be developed.

1.3 Subsequently, after informal consultations with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), two leading international organizations dealing generally with the IAS problem, a questionnaire on the transport of invasive alien species by air was sent to Contracting States (State letter EC 6/21-02/78 dated 30 August 2002).

2. SUMMARY RESULTS OF SURVEY

2.1 The following 48 Contracting States responded to the survey:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China¹, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States and Uzbekistan.

2.2 Thirty-eight of the 49 responses indicated that their Governments were aware, or had recognized anecdotally, the existence of an invasive alien species (IAS) problem in their countries.

2.3 Most States provided examples of invasive alien species that have either positively or probably been introduced into their territories via civil or military aircraft. These IAS include micro-organisms (in discarded aircraft food, through sick passengers and in cargo), insects (in packing material, passenger baggage, cargo, aircraft cabin, containers, cargo hold and on imported animals), plants and plant weeds (in passenger baggage and cargo), mammals (in the aircraft structure and containers) and reptiles (in passenger baggage, wheel wells and containers).

2.3.1 However, nearly all examples given were of those alien species “hitchhiking” on some other species that had intentionally been introduced into their territories, either legally or illegally (i.e. smuggled), for agricultural, horticultural, forestry or other reasons. Hitchhiking species include, for example, insects found in packing material and cargo or carried on imported animals, animal or human viruses, viruses found in discarded aircraft food and fungi found in plants or seeds.

2.3.2 A few examples were given of alien species unintentionally introduced via civil aircraft without the assistance of a “host”. These include mosquitoes and other insects carried in the aircraft cabin and the introduction of the grey squirrel into Europe (probably carried in the aircraft structure or a container), the white grub (beetle) transported in the cargo hold and the brown tree snake (carried in aircraft wheel wells or other parts of the aircraft). Potential unintentional introductions by air of aquatic plants (and any hitchhiking invasive organisms) entangled on float-equipped or amphibious aircraft was also mentioned.

2.4 The responses indicated that States have in place detailed border entry controls and/or management programmes aimed at preventing the introduction of potentially invasive alien species. Education programmes include handing out brochures to passengers (both in-flight and on disembarkation), Internet sites, media advertisements, airport notices, quarantine declaration on arrival cards, information workshops, awareness campaigns in schools and villages and announcements through travel agents. Physical interventions include the use of detector dogs, the disinsection and disinfection of aircraft, passenger, cargo and baggage searches, the use of shoe disinfectant mats, the use of light traps at airports and post office mail inspection. Enforcement actions include the application of penalties via courts and instant fines.

2.5 Many States also described outbound border controls and/or management programmes in place aimed at preventing the unintentional *export* of potentially invasive species, for example, inspection of agricultural, horticultural and animal exports, to ascertain that they are free from dangerous diseases and

¹ Two separate responses were received from Mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administration Region.

pests, and issuance of phytosanitary or zoosanitary export certificates in accordance with the quarantine import requirements of foreign countries.

2.6 There are currently no specific agreements directly related to IAS and international civil aviation. Nineteen States, however, provided details of their membership in international governmental organizations that directly address the prevention/management of the unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien species, and whose work might have a bearing on the transport of invasive alien species by air. The most important of these include the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) (international standard-setting bodies with regard to pest/disease prevention and control in plants and animals, respectively); the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (which requires its Contracting Parties to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate, those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or other species); the Biosafety Advisory Group of the World Health Organization (WHO); the World Trade Organization (whose Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO/SPS) are important in this regard); and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

2.7 Some States indicated that they have also entered into regional and/or bilateral agreements in the fields of agricultural quarantine and health.

2.8 Finally, the responding States made recommendations as to what ICAO could do to assist its Contracting States prevent the unintentional introduction of potentially invasive alien species into their territories via international civil aviation. These suggestions fall into the following broad categories:

- a) drafting relevant standards aimed at preventing the *exportation* of potentially invasive alien species (e.g. the use of lights at airports, documentation requirements, inspection of aircraft, ensuring the use of clean packing material for air cargo);
- b) establishing contacts, and working closely, with other international organizations concerned with this subject; and
- c) dissemination of pertinent information (e.g. to the public, air travellers, States) by way of workshops, guidance material, and other means.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 International civil aviation appears to be a significant pathway for the unintentional introduction of invasive alien species of the “hitchhiking” type (such as micro-organisms, weeds and insects) that are carried into countries on other species intentionally introduced (e.g. plants, fruits, packing material and animals) or on “hosts” (air passengers). Self-propelled species such as insects, reptiles and mammals that stow away on aircraft and are thus unintentionally transported to new environments are not so common. Therefore, it may be concluded that international civil aviation appears not to be a significant pathway for unintentional introductions of self-propelled species.

3.2 However, the responses to the survey generally imply that it is the end result—the negative impact of invasive alien species on human and animal health agriculture, horticulture, the environment and animal and plant biodiversity—that is important and not whether the species are intentionally or unintentionally introduced.

3.3 The issue of invasive alien species is of interest to different governmental agencies, e.g. agriculture, health, environment, forestry and conservation and, of course, the department of civil aviation, in case of the transport of IAS by air. The interests of all agencies converge at border controls during the import/export processes, where preventative measures could best be applied.

3.4 Thus, ICAO's coordinating role, including setting standards and establishing contacts with other organizations with regard to IAS, would best assist States to prevent IAS incursions via air transport.

4. **RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION**

4.1 In light of the above, the Council recommends that ICAO develop a strategy along the lines recommended in paragraph 2.8, for the prevention of unintentional introductions of invasive alien species via international civil aviation.

4.2 In order to develop this strategy, the Council recommends that:

- a) Contracting States and interested international organizations be apprised of the results of the survey in State letter EC 6/21-02/78 on the introduction of invasive alien species by air;
- b) Contracting States be requested to forward to ICAO the "best practices" from their various agencies (agriculture, horticulture, customs, quarantine, health) on the prevention of invasive alien species introductions by air, for publication by the Organization as guidance material; and
- c) appropriate ICAO bodies should consider drafting Standards and Recommended Practices, if appropriate, reflecting the most common procedures or practices of States, for adoption in the relevant Annex(es) to the Chicago Convention.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION²**

5.1 The resources available under Programme 3.8, Facilitation, of the draft Programme Budget 2005-2007 are devoted to higher priority activities and do not provide for the proposed work set out in paragraph 4.2. However, it is expected that FAL will have access to voluntary contributions to the AVSEC Mechanism that can be used to help fund some of the higher priority activities that have security implications, thereby enabling some resources from Programme 3.8 to be released for this work.

² This information is presented only to indicate the estimated financial impact of the proposed action. The funds allocated to this proposed action will depend upon the final form of the Programme Budget of the Organization for 2005-2006-2007 approved by the Assembly.

6. **ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY**

6.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note this report;
- b) endorse the plan of action recommended in paragraph 4 above; and
- c) review the draft text in the Appendix to replace Assembly Resolution A33-18.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTION FRAMED BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION AND RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

Resolution 29/

Preventing the introduction of invasive alien species

Whereas the global community has increasingly recognized the threat to biological diversity posed by invasive alien species;

Whereas international transportation, including civil air transportation, represents a potential pathway for the introduction of invasive alien species; and

Whereas the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Invasive Species Programme and other intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations are currently working on means to effectively assess and manage alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats and native species;

The Assembly:

1. *Urges* all Contracting States to support one another's efforts to reduce the risk of introducing, through civil air transportation, potentially invasive alien species to areas outside their natural range;
2. *Requests* the ICAO Council to develop guidance material and, if appropriate, Standards and Recommended Practices, to assist Contracting States to reduce the risk of introducing potentially invasive alien species to areas outside their natural range and to continue working with the appropriate organizations in this regard;
3. *Requests* the ICAO Council to report on the implementation of this Resolution at the next ordinary session of the Assembly; and
4. *Declares* that this resolution supersedes Resolution A33-18.

— END —