

Round Table Discussion Session

COVID-19 Pandemic and the Liberalization of Air Transport

Concept Note

Air transport is an essential component of the global society, a crucial driver of economic, social and cultural development, which has become an indispensable means of transport, providing a worldwide transportation network, generating economic growth, creating jobs, and facilitating international trade and tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated public health risk mitigation measures, including travel restrictions and borders closure, have resulted in unprecedented depressed travel demand and significant disruptions to businesses and supply chains in global air transport. The crisis, which threatens the very existence of the industry, resulted in a drastic reduction in global passenger traffic by 60% and a loss of about USD371 billion in airlines' passenger operating revenue in 2020, compared to 2019 levels. The precipitous decline in air traffic has created severe liquidity strain to all aviation stakeholders, including but not limited to airlines, airports, air navigation service providers (ANSPs) and aerospace manufacturers, as well as all those throughout the aviation value chain.

As States and industry are making efforts on the restart and recovery of the industry, views have been expressed that the circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, present an opportunity to “build back better”, through revitalizing and improving the existing air transport economic policy and regulatory environment including the liberalization of market access, air carrier ownership and control, air cargo services, as well as the enhancement of good regulatory practices and governance for air transport. However, the challenges brought on by the pandemic may render the achievement of these regulatory improvements more difficult.

A round table discussion session with the theme “*COVID-19 Pandemic and the Liberalization of Air Transport*” is being organized by ICAO on the occasion of ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN 2021) Event in Bogota, Colombia on 6 December 2021. The discussions would address the pandemic-driven priorities, and examine the opportunities and challenges engendered by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic to revitalize and retool the aviation system and how to effectively address the current reality of regulatory barriers to the liberalization of market access, air carrier ownership and control, and air cargo services, which impede efficiency and capital base of airlines, as well as hinder air connectivity improvement.

11:00-12:30

Panel Discussion

**Proposed
Panel
Members**

- ➔ **Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma**, Director, Air Transport Bureau, **ICAO (Moderator)**
- ➔ **Captain Musa Nuhu**, Director General, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (**NCAA**)
- ➔ **Mr. Mark Bosly**, Chief Air Services Negotiator (**United Kingdom**)/Acting Chairperson of ATRP.
- ➔ **Mr. Ricardo Bisinotto Catanant**, Member Board of Directors, National Civil Aviation Agency (**ANAC**), Brazil
- ➔ **Mr. James Wiltshire**, Assistant Director, External Affairs, (**IATA**)
- ➔ **Mr. Hong Rak Kim**, Director for International Air Transport, (**MOLIT**), Republic of Korea
- ➔ **Mr. Lucas Rodriguez Gomez**, Chief of the Air Transport Office, Aeronautica Civil, Republic of Colombia

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