



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

INFORMATION PAPER

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**North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) States Civil Aviation Authorities Directors
General Virtual Meeting on COVID-19 Aviation Recovery and Restart**

14 April 2021

Agenda Item 5: Other Business

HIGH LEVEL COVID CONFERENCE (HLCC 2021)

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This information paper briefs on the HLCC, which provisional theme will be “One Vision for Air Transport Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic”. The HLCC 2021 will address various COVID-19-related items under a single umbrella, replacing the originally planned Third High-level Safety Conference (HLSC 2021), the High-level Facilitation Conference (HLFC 2021) and the High-level event envisaged by the Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) to strengthen State commitments to leading the recovery from the pandemic. Depending on the evolution of the situation, the Conference will be held as either one of the following two options: a) a one-week event from 18 to 22 October 2021 in an in-person setting; or b) a two-week event from 12 to 22 October 2021, with half-day meetings each day, in a virtual or hybrid setting. The confirmed dates and meeting schedule will be communicated by the end of May 2021.

Strategic Objectives:

- Safety
- Security & Facilitation
- Economic Development of Air Transport

References:

- State Letter ref. 2020/131

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the ICAO work programme and the States requests, ICAO had planned originally for 2021 the Third HLSC to be held in Montréal. Similarly, the convening of the First High Level facilitation Conference (HLFC) was also envisioned for 2021. During the 219th Session, the Council agreed to give consideration, at the appropriate time, to holding a special high-level conference to discuss and share best practice response measures to deal with COVID-19 outbreaks. The Report of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) also stated that “ICAO should consider convening a high-level meeting.”

1.2. In light of the concerns expressed with the organization of three high-level meetings in 2021, the Council approved the convening of a single high-level conference replacing the initially proposed two high-level conferences and a high-level COVID-19 event.

1.3 In this regard, the Secretariat was requested to consult Member States on the agenda items and expected outcomes, resulting in the consultation of State letter ref. 2020/131 dated 15 December 2020 seeking comments on the provisional agenda for the HLCC 2021 by 15 February 2021. In the letter, the Secretariat proposed that with the provisional theme of “One Vision for Air Transport Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic”, the HLCC 2021 consider a broad range of issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic response and the aviation sector recovery. To achieve concrete outcomes, the distinct agendas were prepared for a Plenary Session and two technical streams, one related to safety and the other related to facilitation. The proposed agendas incorporated topics that are of common interest and pose challenges to aviation, transport and health authorities, border and custom agencies, tourism and travel sectors, and the industry stakeholders at large.

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2.1 As of 25 February 2021, 24 replies to the consultation had been received from 21 States and 3 international organizations. Given the uncertainties surrounding ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions, the HLCC 2021 has been proposed from 12 to 22 October 2021, in either a virtual or hybrid setting, depending on the evolution of the situation. The Conference will consist of two technical streams, i.e. Safety and Facilitation, as well as the Plenary Session and provisional agenda reflecting received comments. The Secretariat will refine the agenda in order to prioritize the items related to COVID-19, in particular the Facilitation stream

2.2 Following the best practices for virtual meetings, around half-day meetings will be scheduled every day in a flexible manner to accommodate different time zones of participants from around the world. A detailed timetable, including schedule and sequence of the meetings, will be communicated through a State letter by the end of May 2021, together with the agenda and other administrative arrangements such as credentials and registration, as well as the submission of supporting documentation.

2.3 Relevant additional topics proposed by Member States will be accommodated within the provisional agenda originally proposed in the State letter. The Plenary Session will address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on aviation, seeking to strengthen political commitments by States to leading a sustainable recovery, building resilience, which touches on most of the economic-related issues mentioned in States’ responses. Emphasis shall be made on, inter alia, lessons learned to better manage future crises, sustainability and building resilience, and aviation’s role in supporting global recovery. Additional or more specialized topics on economic-related issues suggested by some States can be covered by a side-session. The Safety stream agenda items shall be similar to the tentative agenda circulated under State letter 2020/44. The Facilitation stream will consider agenda items in line with all health-related Annex 9 provisions and corresponding guidance material as proposed in the State letter. The Safety and Facilitation streams will make recommendations, within the scope of their respective agenda, on individual agenda items for action by States and/or ICAO. Refer to **Appendices A and B** for the Meeting Plenary session, and Safety and Facilitation streams Agendas. These recommendations will be discussed in particular during the 41st Session of the Assembly planned for 2022.

2.4 The main outcome of the Conference seeks to culminate in the political will and commitment of States to reach a global consensus on the recovery and resilience of the aviation sector while ensuring its safety and facilitation objectives for the coming years.
