



## *ICAO urges national governments to implement international standards supporting COVID-19 response effectiveness*

For immediate release

**Montréal, 18 March 2020** – The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) issued a call to national governments today on COVID-19 response effectiveness, urging all of its 193 member States to establish or adhere to several key international requirements contained in Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and relating primarily to the movement and health related screening of passengers and goods.

States were strongly urged in the ICAO State Letter to coordinate between aviation and health authorities and to establish National Facilitation Committees that comprise all relevant groups, taking into account that cross-sector collaboration at the national level is essential.

They were also encouraged to adhere to ICAO Annex 9 standards relevant to sustainable air freight operations and the global air cargo supply chain, and to refer to specific Annex 9 guidance and other ICAO guidance manuals concerning additional measures to be applied in a health emergency, including screening.

The ICAO Annex 9 standards to expedite the release and clearance of goods carried by air include a focus on the use of modern screening techniques for examination of goods, and others which importantly apply to the entry, departure, and transit of aircraft engaged in relief flights. States in this context were reminded by ICAO to implement measures to facilitate the receipt of aid, including through the provision of overflight and landing rights and the necessary privileges and immunities for relief units, in an effort to avoid disruption.

“I have been pleased to note that several States have implemented measures to prevent disruptions to such critical operations, by maintaining all cargo flights and excluding crew members of cargo flights from quarantine,” noted ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu. “There is an urgent need to ensure the sustainability of the global air cargo supply chain and to maintain the availability of critical medications and equipment such as ventilators, masks, and other health and hygiene items which will help reduce the spread of COVID-19.”

Dr. Liu also underscored in the State letter that while some States have already implemented entry screening for air travellers, “the evidence had shown that screening can miss infected cases and that States should consider them as part of a multilayer COVID-19 response and mitigation strategy.”

The Director-General of the WHO declared the outbreak of the COVID-19 a pandemic without recommending any travel or trade restrictions, and stressing that all countries should seek to strike a fine balance between protecting public health, respecting human rights, and minimizing economic and social disruption.

Today’s ICAO call directed governments to the resources and links on the UN Aviation agency’s dedicated [COVID-19 online information portal](#), which includes the latest WHO advisories, and it also asked them to report back to ICAO, itemizing their COVID-19 actions taken, by no later than 30 April.



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## Resources for Editors

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States.

[ICAO COVID-19 online information portal](#)

[ICAO Facilitation website](#)

[CAPSCA Website COVID-19 area](#)

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