



ICAO and WCO issue joint calls on vaccine supply chain priorities, new customs and security guidelines

For immediate release

Montréal, 22 February 2021 – ICAO and the World Customs Organization (WCO) have published a joint statement calling on governments to demonstrate maximum flexibility with respect to border clearance and air transport supply chain operations essential to the effective distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and related medical supplies.

In a separate but related development, the two agencies have also developed new guidelines to help countries achieve better alignment of their customs and security procedures.

Signed by ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu and WCO Secretary General Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the joint statement on vaccines urges the rapid establishment of the infrastructure needed to support end-to-end vaccine storage and logistics for public supplies.

Improved open collaboration between the aviation and customs communities and partnering organizations is also strongly emphasized.

ICAO and the WCO are furthermore encouraging countries to designate required aviation staff as 'key workers' providing an essential service, in alignment with the WHO's *Roadmap for Prioritizing Uses of COVID-19 Vaccines*.

"ICAO continues to work very closely with regional and international organizations, and industry partners such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Airports Council International (ACI), to provide up-to-date guidance to government aviation authorities, airlines, and airports," Dr. Liu emphasized.

"To better expedite air cargo operations, and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines, governments are being urged to bring these matters to the immediate attention of their national health and transport authorities, customs authorities, local governments, and any other concerned parties."

The new [Joint WCO-ICAO Guiding Principles for Pre-Loading Advance Cargo Information](#) will meanwhile build on earlier progress achieved by ICAO and WCO on another important risk management approach, one focused on the pre-loading of advance cargo information and designed exclusively to prevent explosives from being placed in air cargo shipments.

"Since the 2010 incident where air cargo was attempted to be used as a delivery mechanism for explosive devices, the WCO and ICAO have been partnering to secure and protect the air cargo and mail supply chain, in addition to other objectives relating to the unfettered movement of people, goods, and conveyances across international borders," Dr. Liu noted.



Resources for Editors

[ICAO's Air Cargo website](#)

[ICAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Platform](#)

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially-recognized air transport stakeholders.

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