



Closer regional, international coordination needed for safety, security, efficiency of vaccine distribution globally

For immediate release

Montréal, 1 March 2020 – Speaking to European and North Atlantic Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCAs) very recently, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu emphasized that while COVID-19 vaccines are now offering hope of a more imminent pandemic recovery globally, closer collaboration and procedural alignment among air transport stakeholders will be needed to get the billions of doses to their destinations safely, securely and rapidly.

“We must continue to reinforce to decision makers that air cargo supply chains are critical to these efforts,” Dr. Liu remarked. “ICAO has published safety and security guidelines for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, and we’ve also enacted our Vaccine Action Plan to more efficiently align vaccine efforts with applicable CART guidance and other ICAO provisions related to air cargo.”

Vaccine distribution is consistent with the traditional expectation societies have placed on air freight for the global distribution of many pharmaceuticals, through well-established global procedures. Some COVID vaccines, however, pose exceptional temperature requirements far beyond what aircraft and supply chains were formerly expected to maintain.

“Our latest vaccine planning takes on board economic considerations, as well as the relevant provisions of Annexes 6, 9, 17, 18 and 19 to the Chicago Convention which are relevant to efficient and safe transport of vaccine cargo by air,” Dr. Liu stated. “More will be required, however, including the adaptation of current infrastructure, procedures, and resources. These responses in turn will need to be tailored on the basis of whether a country is a vaccine supplier or recipient, or both in some cases.”

Dr. Liu also stressed to her audience how Europe’s numerous international borders and varying pandemic requirements make the current cooperation being undertaken by DGCA’s through ICAO’s EURNAT Office more critical than ever.

“European carriers have been among the worst affected by COVID-19, suffering more financial failures than anywhere else in the world, Dr. Liu commented, “and I would recall in this context ICAO’s new guidance on economic and financial measures, designed to help States alleviate the challenges carriers and other stakeholders are facing and maintain essential connectivity.”



Air cargo supply chains are critical to global vaccine distribution efforts. ICAO has published related safety and security guidelines to help countries optimize its role, and it has also enacted our Vaccine Action Plan to more efficiently align vaccine efforts with applicable CART guidance and other ICAO provisions related to air cargo.

Resources for Editors

[ICAO's COVID-19 Portal](#)

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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