



ICAO joins UN call for prioritized vaccinations for aircrew and seafarers

For immediate release

Montréal, 26 March 2021 – ICAO joined four other UN agencies today in calling on countries to prioritize COVID-19 vaccinations for aircrew and seafarers.

In addition to ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu, the special Joint Statement was signed by the heads of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

“The implementation of the current WHO recommendations are of primordial importance to the continued and optimal operation of the international civil aviation network, and therefore to the transport worldwide of essential shipments and workers,” Dr. Liu declared.

The Joint Statement stresses the WHO’s advice that at the present time countries should not introduce requirements of proof of vaccination for international travel as a condition of entry, given both the critical unknowns regarding the efficacy of vaccination in reducing transmission, and the limited global availability of vaccine doses.

It also emphasizes that maritime and air transport are essential activities underpinning global trade and mobility, and key to a sustainable socio-economic recovery, and notes the full joint support of the participating agencies for the timely development of an international harmonized framework for vaccination certificates to facilitate international travel for seafarers and aircrew.

“As the Joint Statement draws attention to, the application of stringent public health rules to these key workers, including quarantine, has resulted in hindered connectivity, operational complexity, and significant costs,” Dr. Liu noted.

“The statement also calls on governments to prioritize seafarers and aircrew in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes, together with other essential workers, in accordance with the WHO SAGE Roadmap for prioritizing the use of COVID-19 vaccines.”

The total number of pre-pandemic licensed aviation professionals, including pilots, air traffic controllers, and licensed maintenance technicians, was 887,000 according to ICAO statistics. Air transport carried about 5.7 billion passengers in 2019, and airfreight pre-pandemic represented 35% of the value of goods shipped in all modes combined.



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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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