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**Subject:** Implementation of contingency arrangements to reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19

**Action required:** a) Review existing or planned air traffic services contingency arrangements; b) Note the importance of avoiding undue or inadvertent restrictions

Sir/Madam,

1. I have the honour to refer to the urgent need to reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19 by air transport and to protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel. In this respect, it has come to my attention that a few notices to airmen (NOTAM) do not provide sufficient information on the extent of restrictions to flight operations, the operational impact of aerodrome closures or the reduction of air traffic services.

2. In recalling the obligations of States contained in Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services*, Section 2.32 – Contingency arrangements, concerning the development, promulgation and implementation of contingency plans, I encourage States to review all restrictions to flight operations, existing or planned, to ensure that they are appropriate, taking into account the need to facilitate operations to the extent possible.

3. Special attention should be given to the facilitation of entry, departure and transit of aircraft engaged in relief flights as per Annex 9 — *Facilitation* Standard 8.8, in light of the urgent need to ensure sustainability of the global air cargo supply chain enabling notably to maintain the availability of equipment such as ventilators, masks and other health and hygiene-related goods, which are necessary to assist in reducing the public health risk of the spread of COVID-19.

4. With these points in mind, your review should consider the provision of air traffic services (ATS) and aerodrome services to the following operations:

- a) aircraft in a state of emergency;
- b) overflights;
- c) operations related to humanitarian aid, medical and relief flights;

- d) alternate aerodromes identified in the flight plan (including those being used for extended diversion time operations (EDTOs));
- e) technical landings where passengers do not disembark;
- f) cargo flights; and
- g) other safety-related operations.

5. Once this review has been completed, and contingency arrangements are proven to be necessary, it is incumbent upon the air navigation services provider (ANSP) to ensure that information on exceptions such as those detailed in paragraph 4 are detailed in the subsequent promulgation of NOTAM.

6. Finally, your urgent attention is drawn to the need for contingency arrangements to manage the potential for reduced staffing across air navigation services personnel, but particularly in operational centres providing ATS and aerodrome services.

7. On any of these matters, should you require specific guidance, please contact your accredited ICAO Regional Office.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Fang Liu  
Secretary General