



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Twenty Third Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/23) & Sixth Meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group for the AFI Region (RASG-AFI/6) – Joint sessions

(Virtual, 23 November and 2 December 2020)

Agenda Item 2: COVID-19 Impact on Aviation sector: The APIRG/RASG-AFI context

DEVELOPMENT, HARMONIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL HEALTH PROTOCOL RELATED TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(Presented by EAC CASSOA)

SUMMARY

This paper presents on the coordinated approach deployed by CASSOA towards harmonization and implementation of health protocol following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Agency recognized the imperatives and urgency to enable States, including government regulators, airports, airlines and aircraft manufacturers among other stakeholders of the aviation ecosystem to develop, in coordination with public health authorities, a set of measures aimed at reducing health risks to air travelers, aviation workers, and the general public.

In a bid to achieve this important task, the EAC CASSOA provided the necessary support to EAC States for ensuring that States implement a coordinated response of international magnitude. In this effort, CASSOA facilitated development of harmonized *COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol -Operational Guidelines for The Management of Air Passengers and Aviation Personnel in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The guidance is indispensable for providing airport operators, air operators and Civil Aviation Authorities in the EAC, as well as other relevant stakeholders, on how to facilitate the safe and gradual restoration of passenger transport and control spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Action: the meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of coordinated efforts in the EAC States towards implementing harmonized health protocols in line with the ICAO CART recommendations;
- b) encourage AFI States and RSOOs in the African Continent to spearhead and coordinate regional harmonized health measures related to COVID-19 pandemic;
- c) encourage AFI States to institute periodic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) to assess level of Implementation of harmonized measures at regional level under the CAPSCA framework

<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	A, D, E
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None
<i>References</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis • ICAO Annex 9 - Facilitation • High Level Task Force (HLTF) African Aviation Industry restart:

	<p><i>Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.cassoa.org/covid19
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In line with the ICAO-CART report and related recommendations, the EAC-CASSOA coordinated a regional strategy with the Partner States and developed the aviation health safety protocol with the purpose of providing guidance to airport operators, air operators and Civil Aviation Authorities in the EAC, as well as other relevant stakeholders, on how to facilitate the safe travel during the COVID-19 period and gradual restoration of passenger transport. This is subject to the deployment of proportionate and effective measures to protect the health of aviation personnel and passengers, by reducing COVID-19 transmission at the airport and on-board aircraft as much as practicable.

1.2 The general situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, including the implemented containment measures, the potential risk of being exposed to infected individual(s) and the need to deal with unfamiliar situations in the workplace are likely to have a negative impact on the mental well-being of staff members and passengers. In this context, airport operators and air operators, and, where applicable, other service providers should promote staff members' access to counselling and/or support programmes and make use of the WHO guidelines and any other relevant guidance.

1.3 National civil aviation authorities are encouraged to adopt proposed harmonized measures and monitor implementation of the recommended measures and provide assistance where needed, especially in coordinating and harmonizing implementation with other national organizations or agencies. At this juncture, CASSOA, Centre for Disease Control – Africa (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) are ready to support already existing efforts implemented by national aviation authorities for purposes of ensuring containment of COVID-19 pandemic.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In the context of the measures, an increase in cases of unruly or disruptive passengers were expected and anticipated, either prior to departure or in-flight. This may be due to passengers not wishing to sit next to each other or accusing each other of not following the rules. This was envisaged to be a strong potential for conflict if not managed properly. In the worst case, panic could become quite a serious threat to flight safety – for example if there are significant displacements within the cabin. To address this, operators were invited to consider the raised likelihood of these risk factors within their procedures and training.

2.2 The measures were developed before the reopening of air operations and could not benefit from useful experience on ground. Today, the operations have resumed in most African States and therefore, proposals of amendments of health protocol or measures in reference to the situation on ground should be made to include any requisite changes and achieve desired effectiveness.

2.3 The measures are also meant to increase the stakeholders alert level of preparedness and response to identify, manage and care for new cases.

2.4 Prepare to respond to different public health scenarios, recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing cases and outbreaks of COVID-19.

2.5 Assess the risk and rapidly implement the necessary measures at the appropriate scale to reduce both COVID-19 transmission, economic, public and social impact.

3. ACTION REQUIRED

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of coordinated efforts in the EAC States towards implementing harmonized health protocols in line with the ICAO CART recommendations;
- b) encourage AFI States and RSOOs in the African Continent to spearhead and coordinate regional harmonized health measures related to COVID-19 pandemic; and
- c) encourage AFI States to institute periodic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) to assess level of Implementation of harmonized measures at regional level under the CAPSCA framework.