

Opening Remarks by the CAPSCA-AP Chairperson (AVM M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman, CAAB)

***“Harmonized Implementation of CART Take-Off Guidance for air travel through COVID-19”-
Video Conference on 16 July 2020***

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

Mr. Arun Mishra, the Regional Director ICAO APAC Office. D.M Parakrama Dissanayake, CAPSCA Regional Coordinator; Dr Ansa Jordaan, Chief of Aviation Medicine, ICAO HQ, Dr. Jarnail Singh, CAPSCA Global Adviser, Fellow Colleagues, DGCA's, Representatives from the member-States of the Asia Pacific Region, Representatives from WHO, IATA, ACI, CANSO and all the participants of today's meeting, Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning.

Indeed it's a great honor for me to address this session second time as Chairperson of CAPSCA-AP. At the beginning I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the ICAO- Asia Pacific Regional Office for arranging this online conference to discuss, “Harmonized Implementation of CART Take-off Guidance for air travel through COVID-19”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We attended 1st CAPSCA-Asia Pacific 12th Special Meeting online on 21 May 2020 to share our experiences in preventing the spread of most deadly communicable disease of this century and discussed on the member States' preparation for the recovery phase of COVID Pandemic.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

We expected a declining curve of the affected rate by now. Every affected country, with her resources, has been fighting against COVID-19 for the containment of this deadly virus. Some countries after succeeding in containment of the pandemic, they have been affected again. So the risk is prevailing throughout. But what we see that there is a consistency in making consolidated efforts and comprehensive measures as per the WHO guidelines, implemented by the states to contain this virus.

At this juncture I'd like give a short pen picture on the scenario in Bangladesh. In a thickly populated country like Bangladesh it is bit a challenging, little different and complex too. To fight the pandemic, our front liners (health care personnel, Doctors, members of our Police, Armed Forces etc.) have come forward, sacrificing their own lives to bring the pandemic under control. Till yesterday, we have recorded Total affected: 1.9 M with a total dead toll: 2457 pers. Currently we find a slow decrease in the affected rate.

I like to proudly mention here that the pandemic has been addressed quite efficiently from the very beginning by our Government. At the onset, the honorable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina addressed to the nation giving a clear directive and policy framework of the Government incorporating social health guidance and measures in fighting COVID-19. She is personally taking the accountability of all preventive measures against the pandemic and urging people to abide by strictly the health regulations. The Govt has also declared BAIL OUT packages for the devastated industries and for the poor citizens.

Despite Bangladesh Government took few tight steps like isolation and lockdown of cities/places in line with the WHO directives. But, we are still facing difficulties in implementation due to densely populated localities all along the country. But through growing public awareness, with the government assistance and enforcement we are hopeful that soon we will be able to contain substantially the spread of the virus in our country. We hope In Sha Allah, we along with all other countries of the world shall succeed in winning this war against COVID_19 soon.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Its fact that COVID has united us to pursue wining this war and ICAO, WHO and other partners in aviation sectors guiding us in formulating the strategy (i.e. CART) in that NO COUNTRY should be in ISOLATION. But, I have a concern that in recent days, we are witnessing few individualistic approach by some member states which contradict aspiration of ICAO, IATA. For example banning travel from some countries, incorporating punitive measures to the airliners for carrying passengers who later diagnosed COVID +ve; compulsory testing of COVID prior to making air travel etc. I think ICAO secretariat, IATA, WHO and other organization will come up with some practicable solution for all nations, I will urge our AP member-states to show our commitment in unity and collaboration. For this reason I sincerely appreciate ICAO region office and congratulate ICAO CAPSCA-AP for arranging this timely video-conference to discuss and resolve some critical issues to restart and recovery from the prevailing COVID-19 Public Health crisis. I am confident that the CAPSCA –AP member States and other International organizations will share their valuable ideas and views of how smoothly we can get back to normal flight operation.

I reiterate here the ICAO CART guidance: **Not to be harsh but to be flexible, not to be burden on the aviation industry but to be considerate and justifiable and last but not the least, not to be distorted but to earn crew and passengers confidence.**

I am hopeful that by this time most of the Operators with collective efforts of the stakeholders have adopted the risk mitigating measures highlighted in the specific 4 Modules of - Airports, Aircraft, Crew and Cargo in the ICAO CART Take-Off guidance to overcome from the present COVID-19 crisis.

At the end I once again thank regional office for initiating this event. Thanks to all participants for your patience hearing,

Until CORONA is disappeared, Let us habituate ourselves to coexist safely by maintaining social distancing and following all thoughtful updated health directives. And also let us work together to rescue our aviation industries.

May Almighty Bless us all. Thank you, ladies and Gentlemen.

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