



Opening Remarks by ICAO APAC Regional Director – Mr. Tao Ma

The Joint ICAO-ACI-PSIDS Information Sharing Session

10th November 2021

Opening

- First of all I welcome all the participants to this meeting, the DGCAs and participants of the invited States in the Pacific Region, Director General, ACI Asia-Pacific and others.
- We are conducting this Information Sharing Meeting for the Pacific Small Island Developing States at a time when resumption of cross border commercial air travel has become the most crucial factor for resurgence of island economies and build back the lifelines of people who depend much on aviation and tourism.
- This meeting also demonstrates how committed ICAO is to support the PSIDS to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic when aviation gradually resumes and further uplift aviation safety and security compliance of the respective civil aviation administrations.
- ICAO has a long-standing history, working in collaboration with the international aviation organizations, industry and partners. Such collaboration became much more prominent in the fight against the pandemic. The APAC Office promotes this collaboration to support the Pacific Islands, the reason why this session is conducted in association with a major international aviation partner, the Airports Council International Asia Pacific.
- I thank ACI Asia Pacific and its DG, Stefano Baronci and his team for teaming with ICAO on this occasion.

Building up on the Recent Lessons Learnt

- ICAO's response to the challenges of the multidimensional crisis came mainly through the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force, better known as CART, which started work through collaborative multisectoral and multidisciplinary working groups and platforms since early stages of the crisis. The ACCRPG in the Asia Pacific Region was the platform formulated by the DGCAs in the region to adopt CART regionally.
- At this point, however, it is prudent to highlight the recently concluded High-Level Conference on COVID-19, which formalized new commitments on border risk management and vaccination approaches, which should be viewed as game changes to build air transport back better for sustainability and future pandemic resilience. This should accelerate air tourism and trade recovery and reconnecting the world, which would be a take for the Pacific region as well.
- In the presence of over 50 Ministers and Deputy Ministers, the Conference adopted a new ministerial Declaration, which recognizes the severity of the COVID-19 crisis for civil aviation, and its cascading impacts on global supply chains and the many national economies, which rely so significantly on international flights for tourism and trade.
- The Conference also recognized the critical role being played by air transport and the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) in keeping the essential supplies and personnel moving to where the world needs them most.

- There are presentations lined up today to elaborate some of the key aspects in the CART Recommendations and the accompanying guidance for a multi-layered and risk based approach for public health risk management for aviation restart and recovery.
- However, I may emphasize several important actions that your individual States may take in to consideration when you adopt CART recommendations and guidance for your benefit.
- The ICAO Secure Portal houses a very important coordination and feedback site known as the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC), which some of you are familiar with.
- I encourage you to remain actively engaged on the CRRIC and update your States information in that as well as benefit from the information available in the centre.
- In addition, we will cover specific CART recommendations related to Aviation Security and Facilitation and what the ICAO APAC Regional Office has been doing to assist Member States to meet these recommendations.

High Level Ministerial Declarations

- I consider it also opportune at this meeting to briefly mention about the PSIDS Aviation Needs Analysis study recommendations, which are being considered for implementation by ICAO. Though the recent challenges deviated all of us from our planned work activities which somewhat retarded the progress of such implementation, I am pleased that the momentum is building up to speed up the process.
- Let me also applaud your region for conducting the Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting in June this year amidst the challenging environment and successfully concluding the Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security and the associated Ministerial Statement.
- ICAO is pleased at the progress envisaged in your region through the Declaration Commitments, in particular for strengthening the regulatory oversight capability, capacity and effectiveness of Member States, strengthening PASO in response to the ICAO Study as well as considering amendments to PICASST.
- Talking about the APAC Region as a whole, I wish to draw your attention also to the commitments of the Ministers of Asia and Pacific States made through the 2018 Beijing Declaration, which included to certify all aerodromes used for international operations by 2020.
- We have presentations on aerodrome matters in this meeting, so I will not elaborate further.
- However, I urge your early attention to address the aerodrome safety compliance related matters in a timely manner with a plan of action to complete the delayed compliance tasks.

Conclusion

- Your continued cooperation through ICAO helps to assure that the Pacific Region will continue to grow and to prosper.
- I believe all of you will benefit from the conduct of this meeting today.

Thank you.