

JOINT ICAO-WFP Webinar Concept Note

“Regional Cooperation during COVID19 Crisis and Business Continuity Challenges”

Background: The Aviation industry is now undergoing an unprecedented crisis due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. ICAO on its part has quickly recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health crisis – but also an economic, financial and compliance crisis for aviation due to the prolonged lockdown and travel restrictions. ICAO estimates that, at the end of 2020, the COVID-19 impact on scheduled international passenger traffic has reached reductions of up to 71 per cent of seat capacity and up to 1.5 billion passengers globally. Airlines and airports face a potential loss of revenue of up to 314 billion USD and 100 billion USD, respectively, for 2020.

Since the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, ICAO has provided support and guidance to States and the civil aviation industry on the expedited release and clearance of goods carried by air, licensing and certification of crew, aviation safety risk management and facilitation of repatriation flights. To resolve disruptions to trade and global supply chains, ICAO worked to enable expedited air cargo movements, coordinated delivery of humanitarian goods through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), and also published guidance for the implementation of Public Health Corridors to protect crews operating cargo flights.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), through the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), has resolved to partner with its Member States, international and regional organizations, and industry to address these challenges and to provide global guidance for a safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the aviation sector. The CART’s work on its recovery Report and the accompanying ‘Take-Off’ guidance for international aviation, has kept the health, safety, and security of the travelling public of paramount concern throughout. As part of CART endeavors, the third edition of the *Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis (TOGD)*, originally issued in June 2020 and revised in November 2020, provides latest operational and public health guidance related to air travel reflecting technological and medical advancements. The CART recommendations and guidelines will be continuously reviewed and updated based on the latest medical and operational advice, and are intended to harmonize and not replace the COVID-19 recovery roadmaps currently established by States, Regions, or industry groups.

ICAO to address many different issues and new challenges in aviation has conducted numerous webinars. For instance, it is a need of the day that all authorities and industry should play a critical near-term role in assuring the health-centric and disease-preventative cabin environment where governments, operators and passengers are striving to assure an efficient re-start process. Importantly, there is a need for knowledge sharing; resources and well thought out business continuity plans that shall effectively work during this ‘New Normal’ situation caused by COVID Pandemic. Towards this end, ICAO and the World Food Programme under the auspices of an aviation safety campaign are collaborating to conduct a webinar themed as: *“Regional Cooperation during COVID-19 Crisis and Business Continuity Challenges”*. The speakers shall broadly cover the following aspects during the four planned sessions:

[ICAO] ICAO-APAC Regional initiatives during COVID-19 crisis on safety-related matters: ICAO-APAC RO has been very active since the beginning of the COVID Pandemic interacting with all APAC States/Administration providing required guidance. Despite initial signs of improvement towards the end of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified across the globe in 2021 because of new and more

aggressive variants of the virus, which has prompted governments to reintroduce strict lockdowns, travel restrictions, resulting in even larger social and economic ramifications than initially predicted. Under the circumstances, regulatory compliance is a big issue for business and operations continuity plan for both regulator and industry. Yet with the new waves, it is becoming further challenging as many States struggle to comply with the ICAO SARPs.

[IATA] Adverse Impact of COVID crisis and Airline Business Continuity/Service Resumption Planning: Restoration of air connectivity is vital for millions of livelihoods and businesses that rely on cross-border travel, and so it is crucial for the recovery of the global economy. Collective engagement of States and industry serves as the main engine to navigate aviation through the course of restart, recovery and resilience. The Aviation Industry has been adversely affected by the COVID19 crisis and it has proved essential for airlines to have a Business Continuity Plan. Equally important in the current environment is a service resumption plan. Proper planning helps airlines to adjust/maintain/resume services in the event of a pandemic like the COVID-19 crisis or other disasters. Such planning will encompass infrastructure, processes and resources required to sustain and then (re)grow business in the face of an unexpected event.

[WFP/DHL] Airport Response and getting them ready to fight the crisis: The global pandemic crisis calls for a globally harmonized response. Getting Airports Ready for Disasters assesses airport capacities to manage the influx of humanitarian aid and personnel in disaster response situations; it trains airport staff and disaster responders on how to manage this influx; and helps authorities to develop an action plan to increase the response capacity in case of disaster and to guide response operations at the airport.

[WFP/Emirates] Human Factors and Decision Making Process during COVID Crisis: This is another important area to be thought of before the re-start where thousands of pilots have not flown to retain their currency or recency. There are crews flying non-stop busting the duty hours due to different travel restrictions imposed without any reaction time.

This joint ICAO-WFP Webinar will focus on the actions taken and actions required to face the COVID19 crisis and brainstorm on the challenges of New Normal in resuming air-travel highlighting the issues of regulators, airports, industry and humans performance.

Objectives:

By the end of this Webinar, participants will have;

- an understanding on the efforts of ICAO APAC Regional Office to keep the States and Industry aligned with the aim to face the challenges of COVID19 crisis together.
- a visibility of the fact that economic impact of a crisis shall make a dent in business continuity and the need to pre-plan well in advance to face the consequences while continuing with the business looking ahead in practical terms.
- better understanding of Airline Business Continuity Planning and specific issues for Public Health Emergencies.
- an awareness that closure of airports is not an option, rather getting airports ready for the crisis/disaster is the way forward to face a crisis.
- a clear understanding of human performance and fatigue limitations during the crisis.