

Fifteenth Meeting - (CAPSCA-AP/15)
Makati Diamond Residences, Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines
14 – 16 December 2022

ICAO Opening Remarks – Deputy Regional Director, ICAO APAC Office

Mr. Jaime J. Bautista, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Philippines

Captain Manuel Antonio L. Tamayo, Director General, Civil Aviation Authority, Philippines

Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh – and the Chair of the last in-person APAC Regional CAPSCA meeting (who has joined on-line)

(If WHO is present in-person or on-line, address WHO)

Participants from States and Administrations, and International Organizations,

My ICAO colleagues ... Dr. Ansa Jordaan, Chief Aviation Medicine Section from Montreal and from APAC

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

Firstly, let me convey the warm felicitations of the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Director Mr. Tao Ma to this 15th meeting of the CAPSCA initiative, hosted by the Philippines.

I am very pleased to join you today, in particular it being conducted as an in-person event with a good number of participants from overseas. This is a good indication that the cross-border air travel in our region is gradually resuming. You may wish to recall that the Asia Pacific was the fastest growing region in the world by 2019, before we suffered a slump, an unprecedented slump... and our expectation and effort must be to build back better and faster.

This is the second time that the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines is hosting the regional CAPSCA meeting, and I wish to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to DGCA of the Philippines, Captain Tamayo, for willingly agreeing to host it in Manila. I recall your reaction to my suggestion when I met you in September here in Manila during another event, which was prompt

and accommodating. I also thank the Philippines Government for the excellent cooperation extended to ICAO in the regional aviation activities, including hosting the 52 APAC DGCA Conference in October 2015 and many more regional events. Thank you both, Secretary Mr. Bautista and the DG, Captain Tamayo.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot think of any regional or international gathering where some reference to the COVID-19 pandemic is not made. It has had a devastating and lasting impact on all sectors, all spheres, not sparing a single nation bringing socioeconomic turmoil, which some of the small Countries, Least Developed Countries are still struggling to come to terms with. You may agree with me that aviation was the most suffered.

Pre COVID-19, international civil aviation was connecting the world through more than 100,000 daily flights transporting 12 million passengers and around USD 18 billion worth of goods. These operations translated into roughly 4.5 billion passenger movements per year, supporting 65.5 million jobs and 2.7 trillion dollars in world gross domestic product (GDP). The COVID-19 pandemic imposed massive disruptions to movement of passengers and cargo in an unprecedented way, which in turn stunted economic growth.

When flight restrictions were first imposed in April 2020, international air travel collapsed almost entirely. Only two per cent of normal traffic remained, disconnecting families and businesses all over the world. Ever since the sector has witnessed its biggest challenge of all times. To address the multiplier effects of the pandemic, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) had to undergo reprioritization exercises.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, and aiming to provide States with harmonized guidance for a safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the aviation sector, the ICAO Council established the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) in early 2020, which developed ten (10) key principles and twenty (20) recommendations to support States maneuver through the crisis. The accompanying Take-off Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis (TOGD) provided a framework for addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global aviation transportation system.

In addition, ICAO convened the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) in October 2021 to drive reaching a global consensus on a multilateral approach, supported by political will and

commitments of States that would enable the safe and efficient recovery of aviation build a foundation to strengthen resiliency and sustainability in aviation.

One of the biggest strengths ICAO had through this entire process was the work of CAPSCA.

For those participants who are new here and keen to know the history of CAPSCA, it was established in 2006 as a Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation which was a voluntary cross-sectorial, multi-organizational programme managed by ICAO and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), other United Nations (UN) organizations, ICAO Member States, stakeholders from the aviation and public health sectors, other international and regional organizations and academia.

Since its establishment, CAPSCA has been actively involved in numerous Public Health Emergencies such as SARS, Avian Flu (H5N1), Ebola, Zika, Yellow fever etc. the volcanic ash event in Iceland, the nuclear disaster in Fukushima and of course recently, the COVID-19 pandemic.

CAPSCA actively participated in the CART contributed largely to the development of the CART Recommendations and especially, the Take-off: Guidance document. The “ICAO Manual on COVID-19 Cross-Border Risk Management (Doc 10152)” which describes how the aviation sector should mitigate and manage the public health related risks when restarting cross-border air travel was entirely produced by CAPSCA using voluntary collaboration of States as well as other international organizations and industry partners.

Among several ICAO initiatives aimed at strengthening the means of implementation support and enhancing global partnership is the ICAO Implementation Packages (iPacks) which were introduced with a view to assist States, in the short-term, to address COVID-19 recovery efforts and, in the medium- and long-term, to support the implementation of new ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

The iPacks aim at providing support to the ICAO Member States by addressing their various needs to cope with the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in regard to the movement of goods and health of passengers. This includes aspects related to facilitation and aviation security, aviation safety (e.g. management of temporary regulatory alleviations), risk management, as well as air transport and economics as well as public health-related measures.

In that regard, CAPSCA was instrumental in the development of the i-Pack related to public health which is the Public Health Corridors which consists of an assistance package to guide States to

open safe travel corridors as well as help develop State's capability and capacity to build the internal systems to respond to any future Public Health Events of International Concern (PHEIC).

CAPSCA also expanded its existing guidance material and checklists by developing additional checklists and the CAPSCA Public Health Corridor COVID-19 Assistance Review Framework, which served as a baseline used by States and aviation industry partners to develop their own checklists, assurance and accreditation programmes to assist with the implementation of ICAO CART guidance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Every challenge is an opportunity to grow.

ICAO, in the wake of the pandemic, continued to forge new collaborative relationships and strengthen existing partnerships, in particular with other United Nations entities, in support of ICAO's Strategic Objectives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To that end, ICAO and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) signed a new Memorandum of Understanding to enhance collaboration across all Strategic Objectives. Forging ahead further partnerships, ICAO and the World Food Programme strengthened collaboration in the area of humanitarian air services and the ICAO Implementation Packages. Furthermore, ICAO and World Health Organization (WHO) continued their mutually beneficial work through the CAPSCA programme and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for closer collaboration.

I am sure, you will come to know how CAPSCA's significant contributions to the international civil aviation by listening to the many presentations over the next two and half days, especially on Friday when a discussion will take place on the CAPSCA's Assistance Visits to help States' to build resilience in public health events preparedness planning.

Last but not least, I take this opportunity to thank the Asia Pacific States who work closely with CAPSCA and help build regional capacity for public health preparedness planning. In that regard, I wish to make this the right occasion to thank Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore for supporting the Global CAPSCA Symposium conducted in March this year and participating in the three separate panel discussions late at night in their respective countries due to the time zone difference between APAC region and Montreal.

I also wish to say 'thank you' to Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh who was the chair of the CAPSCA regional meeting in 2019 held in Bangladesh for supporting CAPSCA at every given opportunity over the last three years.

Thank you Captain Tamayo and the team for all the courtesies being offered to te participants over these five days which includes the last two days of the Second Aviation Medical Examiner Refresher Workshop.

In concluding, I wish you a productive meeting and look forward to some good discussions.

Thank you.