

**57th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

*“Strengthening Regional Cooperation for the Restoration of Air
Network with No Country Left Behind”*

**ICAO’S EFFORTS IN STRENGTHENING REGIONAL
COOPERATION TO SUPPORT RESTORATION OF
THE AIR NETWORK**

Presented by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

SUMMARY

The Discussion Paper presents an account of programmes, initiatives and activities led by ICAO in the Asia Pacific Region to support ICAO Member States/Administrations towards strengthening the air transportation and assisting the recovery from the severe disruption caused to aviation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ICAO'S EFFORTS IN STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION TO SUPPORT RESTORATION OF THE AIR NETWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The discussion paper 56/DP/12a/4 on the 'Schedule of Conferences of DGCA's in the Foreseeable future' presented to the 56th Conference of the Directors General of Civil Aviation of the Asia and Pacific Regions held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 19 to 23 August 2019 acknowledged the offer made by Republic of Korea to host the conference in 2022.

1.2 While officially re-confirming the commitment to host the conference in 2022, Republic of Korea proposed the theme topic for the conference to be "Strengthening Regional Cooperation for the Restoration of Air Network with No Country Left Behind" which is most appropriate given the circumstances where the Asia Pacific region is still grappling with finding better ways to overcome the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 The host State reckoned that the conference would provide a suitable platform to engage in interactive and stimulating deliberations including sharing of experience and ideas to find new insights for enhanced collaboration to overcome the challenges of today and to restore the air network of the APAC region, which was the fastest growing pre-pandemic.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In the context of the Asia Pacific regional response to the COVID19 situation, ICAO APAC's swift response to assemble the Directors General of Civil Aviation of APAC States/Administrations, regional representation of International Organizations as well as other relevant stake holders resulted in the establishment of the Asia/Pacific COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG) and its three Sub-groups for Safety, Security and Facilitation and Public Health in June 2020.

2.2 The ACCRPG ensured a well-coordinated information-sharing platform to assist with the States' implementation of the recommendations of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Report, including the associated guidance document, Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis.

2.3 One of the major success of ACCRPG, was promoting collaboration with the South East Asia and West Pacific Regional Offices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and creating an outreach to national public health authorities through activities such as the joint ICAO-WHO webinar, the public health – aviation roundtable as well as ICAO CAPSCA meetings which greatly contributed to strengthening regional cooperation in pursuit of regional recovery of air transport in the APAC Region. A separate discussion paper presented by ICAO under Agenda Item 9 captures the performance of the ACCRPG and future expectations for continued regional collaboration.

Safety related harmonization efforts

2.4 The COVID-19 pandemic proved to States the need for higher level of coordination and collaboration, as an essential element in maintaining global harmonization in managing safety. ICAO aligning itself in such a global need, derived various solutions and measures through introduction of two systems; namely COVID Contingency Related Differences (CCRD) Alleviations and Targeted Exemptions System (TES).

2.5 ICAO APAC regional office collaborated throughout the region achieving a score of 95% harmonization for 'accepting other States' alleviations' in the nine safety related SARPS identified by ICAO as applicable. Such harmonization enabled the States' industry to operate flights while

overcoming challenges faced due to border closures and travel restrictions. Safety had been achieved during the implementation of such deviations to Standards through seemingly impossible collaborative efforts on virtual platforms with various levels of State counterparts both at the level of regulators and the industry.

2.6 In addition, since 2021 April, ICAO restricted the extension of alleviations over a period of one year based on the due considerations for the eroding levels of competencies of front line aviation professional. Hence the introduction of the new system of TES was done as a replacement to CCRD. Implementation of TES also needed increased cooperation and collaborations with States, without compromising safety by the introduction of globally harmonized mitigation measures. Harmonization of acceptance of other state's TEs still remains a challenge and may demand state's attention as a priority.

2.7 The three COSCAPs (Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes) operating in Sub-regions of South Asia, South East Asia and North Asia comprising 25 member States and 2 Special Administrative Regions continued to coordinate the provision of assistance to the respective member States/Administrations to implement, improve and harmonize safety oversight in all the USOAP audit technical areas and safety management including capacity development activities for members in collaboration with the Partner States, Organizations and Industry. During the pandemic, the COSCAP-SA and SEA offered several series of webinars not only to their Active Members but also to the Members of the other COSCAPs.

Aviation Security related regional efforts

2.8 The APAC Regional Office and CASP – AP continue to provide assistance and capacity development opportunities for APAC States/Administrations in-line with the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) and APAC Roadmap key priorities and aspirational targets. The first aspirational target set out in the ICAO Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) and corresponding APAC Roadmap was for 80% of APAC States/Administrations to reach above 65% EI by 2020. As of June 2022, 22 out of 41 (53.6%) States/Administrations in APAC Region, have achieved an EI of above 65%.

2.9 During the COVID Pandemic period the APAC Regional Office has continued to liaise virtually with APAC States/Administrations offering support and guidance as appropriate including with relation to COVID and AVSEC related contingency measures and guidance and re-start and recovery of operations. In addition, Aviation Security Training Centres (ASTCs) in the APAC Region have transitioned to virtual delivery and have increased the overall number of AVSEC training courses and workshops provided within the Region.

2.10 The CASP – AP programme is aimed at enhancing the aviation security capabilities of the 23 participating States/Administrations by creating a regional structure for cooperation and coordination on aviation security matters and training of aviation security personnel for capacity improvements. In the first six months of 2022, the CASP-AP programme has delivered 7 training programmes for the benefit of 168 participants for a duration of 720 training days reaching 21 Members who collaborate under CASP-AP. Also in June 2022, 115 participants attended the joint virtual CASP-AP/IATA Cybersecurity Awareness Seminar.

Air Traffic Management Initiatives

2.11 Through ATM-specific webinars ICAO APAC Office supported States and international organizations in the sharing of ATM and ATFM status information, COVID-19-related ATM contingency information, the operational and economic impacts of the pandemic, and air traffic demand predictions. The APAC Regional Strategy for COVID-19-related ATM Contingency Recovery was developed by ICAO to ensure a coordinated response to any resumption of traffic during the period when the ATM capacity of ANSPs was most affected.

2.12 Through the APAC COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG) the regional response to ATM-related concerns resulted in specific recommendations on whole of government consideration of ANSP capacity when considering resumption of international travel (Recommendation 11) and ANS planning to support post-pandemic aviation recovery (Recommendation 12)

2.13 During the COVID-19 pandemic the Asia/Pacific Region was also impacted by unrelated disruption to Air Traffic Services in two FIRs that serve major traffic flows between East and Southeast Asia and the Middle East and Europe. The second of these, resulting from the change of government in Afghanistan, has continued since August 2021. In both cases the APAC Regional Office coordinated the regional and sub-regional response through the formation of Contingency Coordination Teams to ensure to the maximum extent possible the safety and efficiency of flight operations through and near the affected airspace. Also unrelated to the pandemic, the ICAO APAC Office responded to the recent volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga by liaising with relevant UN agencies on the disaster/humanitarian situation, noting that ATM contingency procedures were effectively activated by the State.

CNS/ATM related efforts

2.14 Topics related to Collaborative CNS/ATM Implementation for resilience have been widely addressed on ICAO APAC platforms for years. However, the prolonged challenge of COVID-19 pandemic indicated the time to innovate and navigate in new norm - increasing network connectivity making the world more connected than ever before and integrated as a single operating global network. To attain a safe, secure and environmentally friendly air transport system across the Region, there is a need for close collaboration amongst the States and industry partners, at national and international levels to build a resilient and secure aviation system. ICAO APAC Office continued its function and role to serve the initiatives in this regard.

Flight Procedure design domain

2.15 The Asia-Pacific Flight Procedure Programme (APAC FPP) which is the regional cooperative arrangement to assist States/Administrations to develop sustainable capability in the Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP) design launched some new initiatives to share procedure design experience among States/Administrations. Three Quality Assurance workshops were recently organized to include more advanced concepts such as CDO/CCO, RNP-AR. Besides, collaboration with the FPPs in Africa and in Middle East has been strengthened to share cross regional synergies.

Strengthening PSIDS Regional Cooperation

2.16 The Small Developing Island States in the Pacific sub-region (PSIDS) numbering to 14, share distinct sustainable aviation development challenges which require international support. The challenges aggravated during the challenging times of the COVID-19 where borders of many small Island States remained closed for commercial aviation. In order to support PSIDS to fully discharge their obligations under the Chicago Convention and the Annexes thereto, which most PSIDS are deficient, ICAO is deploying an ICAO Liaison Officer for PSIDS stationed in the sub-region to enhance States' capability to deliver a safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation, which will drive economic resilience.

2.17 ICAO is implementing a longer-term sustainable aviation development roadmap for the PSIDS, crafted on findings and recommendations of a PSIDS need analysis conducted on-site by ICAO in 2019, with planned engagement of a broad stakeholder community including donor States and agencies. In the interim, ICAO has been assisting the Pacific Island States, through a range of assistance activities in their pandemic recovery efforts. These include, contributing to the 1st Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting (RAMM) of 30 June 2021, specific capacity building through ICAO's

‘Implementation Packages’ delivered to Papua New Guinea for aviation security, Samoa and Cook Islands for aviation facilitation and, guidance on opening safe travel corridors delivered to Fiji and Vanuatu.

2.18 Continuous outreach support has been provided for the Resolution of specific aviation security related deficiencies to Nauru, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu. In matters related to Environment, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, PNG and Tuvalu have received support for the establishment of joint State Action Plan (SAP) on CO2 emissions reduction from the aviation sector and this support is still open for the other Island States. Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu have received individual assistance to voluntarily participate in the CORSIA. Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu received ICAO ACT-CORSIA buddy partnership training sessions to support States’ effort to plan and implement Annex 16 Volume IV provisions for CORSIA. ICAO is currently providing dedicated consultations to Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu on safety related capacity building through a virtual technical assistance programme implemented by the APAC Regional Office, which engages technical teams from these States who responded to a common invitation sent to all PSIDS.

ICAO APAC Regional Sub-Office

2.19 The APAC Regional Sub-Office provides strong support to APAC States/Administrations in the fields of Performances Based Navigation (PBN), Airspace Management, Civil Military Cooperation, Air Traffic Management, Airport Collaborative Decision Making through a suite of activities such as regional meetings, webinars, workshops and also technical assistance such as the PBN Go team visits, all of which activities has continued albeit within the constrains created by the pandemic.

2.20 In a human resources constrained global aviation system today, collaboration of the member States/Administrations as well as International Organizations to share human resources with ICAO through ‘secondment of personnel’ opens a new window of opportunity to both parties creating a win-win situation. While this collaboration continued amidst financial burdens during the pandemic, however there exists enough room to strengthen these partnerships as a capability enhancing exercise for the States/Administrations, especially to contribute to the work of the ICAO Regional Sub-Office in Beijing.

The success of this new model of cooperation i.e. Secondment arrangements, heavily relies on the generosity and sustained commitment of all APAC States/Administrations and International Organizations.

3. CLOSING REMARKS

3.1 In closing, while maintaining as much as possible the continuous progress on the 2020/21/22 Operating Plans work programmes and key activities, the ICAO Regional Offices including the APAC Office had to reprioritize activities to also focus on supporting States/Administrations under its accreditation at regional and national levels in the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery and the restart of aviation operations.

3.2. For example Regional Offices provided significant assistance to States/Administrations to input information into the “Gap Analysis tool”, as well as the “Public Health Risk Mitigation Measures tool”, on the CRRIC portal to enhance States’ reporting on the implementation of the CART recommendations and the adoption of the CART guidance.

3.3 The ICAO Regional Offices also played a key role in the iPacks deployment and continued to work with Air Navigation Service Providers and airports to ensure capacity and public health measures were in place, to facilitate passenger movements and support airline operations (particularly in respect of airline recovery and vaccine distribution operations).

3.4 Delays in the implementation of some originally planned key commitments and activities related to the Beijing Ministerial Declaration commitments under Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency were therefore experienced in 2020/21/22 due to the aforementioned reprioritisation.

4. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the efforts and associated regional implementation support activities led by the ICAO during the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen regional cooperation in support of reviving regional aviation ; and
- b) Encourage States/Administrations to provide required resources to the regional efforts led by ICAO, including contribution in kind, in particular proposing secondees to the APAC Regional Sub-Office in Beijing, China.

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