

**60th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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**AGENDA ITEM 5: AVIATION SECURITY AND
FACILITATION**

**PROMOTING AIR CARGO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SAFE,
SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS**

(Presented by Hong Kong, China)

SUMMARY

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) ranked the world's busiest cargo airport in 2024 which is the 14th time since 2010. Hong Kong, China is devoted to upholding the safe and secure air cargo operations through risk-based surveillance, enhanced internal information sharing across the teams and continuous collaboration with different stakeholders, and facilitating the application of non-scheduled air cargo operations to and from HKIA. Hong Kong, China also looks forward to air cargo digitalisation to keep up with the ever-evolving and growing air cargo industry in order to reinforce the position of Hong Kong, China as one of the world's leading international air cargo and aviation hubs.

PROMOTING AIR CARGO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SAFE, SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 For the 14th time since 2010, Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) secured the top position in the 2024 ranking of the world's busiest cargo airports. During the year, HKIA handled 4.9 million tonnes of air cargo, representing a 14% year-over-year increase.

1.2 This paper summarises the efforts committed by the Civil Aviation Department, Hong Kong, China (HKCAD) in upkeeping air cargo flow in a safe, secure and sustainable manner. These include upholding the safe and secure air cargo operations through risk-based surveillance, enhanced information exchange among different teams in the HKCAD and continuous collaboration with stakeholders, and facilitating the application of non-scheduled cargo operations to and from HKIA.

1.3 In order to reinforce the position of Hong Kong, China as one of the world's leading international air cargo and aviation hubs, the HKCAD will on one hand continue to strengthen the oversight and communication with the air cargo industry with a view to further enhancing aviation safety and security. On the other hand, while adopting facilitating measures to accommodate the need of the ever-evolving air cargo industry, the HKCAD advocates the air cargo digitalisation which is vital to support growing air cargo business.

2. DISCUSSION

Risk-based Surveillance

2.1 With the establishment of the Regulated Air Cargo Screening Facilities (RACSF) Scheme since late 2018 to increase the security screening capacity of the air cargo industry, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)'s policy direction of phasing out Account Consignors (AC) was fully implemented as scheduled. To ensure an effective security oversight of various entities participating in the air cargo industry in Hong Kong, China, such as freight forwarders and RACSFs, a risk-based surveillance framework has been implemented. An annual systematic risk assessment is conducted to analyse the risk level of each air cargo entity regulated by the HKCAD. A basket of factors such as the scale of operations and compliance history in the previous surveillance activities are reviewed and assessed. For instance, entities with repeated records of deficiencies would result in a higher risk level. Entities which are categorised as high risk will be subject to more rigorous oversight such as more frequent security audits and inspections. This will ensure valuable resources are optimally utilised. The risk assessment is also regularly kept in view throughout the year to take into consideration any deficiencies committed and the surveillance activities may be correspondingly adjusted.

2.2 At the same time, in order to ensure the robustness of a safe aviation system in Hong Kong, China, a similar surveillance strategy is also applied for the oversight of the safe transport of dangerous goods by air. Apart from entities which are directly involved in the process, other contributing stakeholders such as dangerous goods training providers are also covered. In particular, shippers and freight forwarders who were previously involved in dangerous goods occurrences may be subject to more in-depth scrutiny by the HKCAD.

Enhanced Information Exchange

2.3 While aviation safety and aviation security are under different ICAO's bureaux, the two subjects are intertwined and equally important. While occurrences may usually be reported by entities under either aspect, the HKCAD continues to enhance information exchange between different teams which are responsible for overseeing safe transport of dangerous goods by air and air cargo security matters respectively. This not only allows timely follow up with the respective parties involved in the same occurrences from aviation safety and aviation security perspectives, but also

provide additional intelligence in informing and updating the risk-based inspection plans of both teams.

Continuous Collaboration with Stakeholders

2.4 Air cargo industry is featured by the participation of a wide scope of stakeholders. The successful experience of implementing ICAO's policy direction on phasing out AC as scheduled highlights the importance of close collaboration between the regulator and the air cargo industry in upholding aviation safety and aviation security. Different teams of the HKCAD which oversee safe transport of dangerous goods and air cargo security organise and participate in review meetings together with various stakeholders in the air cargo industry, including the airport operator, air cargo terminals, aircraft operators and relevant air cargo industry representative bodies, to communicate on the latest developments of the air cargo industry and the related regulations, and to deliberate on potential enhancements on the implementation of the air cargo security regimes. The HKCAD also issues notices and advisory circulars on air cargo security and dangerous goods matters from time to time to bring up the common issues or deficiencies identified with recommended practices for the attention and corrective actions of the industry players.

Facilitation to Non-Scheduled Cargo Operations

2.5 With due consideration that the aviation industry is facing dynamic operational circumstances, the HKCAD is cognisant of the need of the aviation industry in effecting timely response to market demands. Through streamlining the application processes in recent years, the HKCAD has facilitated flight applications for non-scheduled cargo air services to and from HKIA and is encouraged to note that the streamlined processes have provided the required flexibility to meet the dynamic market situation particularly during the post-COVID period. In 2024, the HKCAD issued approvals to around 2 900 non-scheduled cargo flights to/from HKIA, which represented around 30% increase over the period before implementation of the measure. The HKCAD will continue to monitor market situation, and flexibly review the needs to fine-tune relevant measures in order to strengthen HKIA as one of the most preferred gateways for aircraft operators all over the world.

Forward – Air Cargo Digitalisation

2.6 When electronic products and artificial intelligence (AI) have become an integral part of our daily lives, it is equally important for the air cargo industry to proactively participate in the air cargo digitalisation early to reap the benefits such as enhanced operational transparency and efficiency. The HKCAD, therefore, encourages all parties in the air cargo industry in Hong Kong, China, such as freight forwarders, RACSFs, and their contractors involving in security screening and secure transportation, to actively adopt digital solutions in cargo handling and documentation processes. The Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA), the operator of the HKIA, has taken the lead in driving air cargo digitalisation and established the HKIA Cargo Data Platform to facilitate a centralised and secure digital data exchange across the air cargo community. The HKCAD will continue to support the air cargo industry in moving towards air cargo digitalisation which promote dissemination of complete and accurate air cargo information along the secure supply chain for aviation safety and aviation security. This will reinforce the position of Hong Kong, China as one of the world's leading international air cargo and aviation hubs.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) note the experiences shared by the HKCAD in upkeeping air cargo operations in a safe, secure and sustainable manner, and visions on air cargo digitalisation in support of growing air cargo business in Hong Kong, China; and

- b) encourage States/Administrations to continue sharing of experiences in sustaining safe and secure air cargo operations for the safe, efficient and sustainable development of aviation.

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