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FACILITATION**

**CHINA'S INNOVATIVE MEASURE ON ARRIVAL CARD
FILING FOR FOREIGNERS**

(Presented by the People's Republic of China)

Information Paper

Summary

This paper systematically expounds on the online arrival card filing facilitation measure innovatively implemented by the National Immigration Administration (NIA) of China. In order to fulfill the relevant requirements of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, and to further streamline entry procedures for passengers at airports of entry (AOEs), NIA has launched an official multilingual online filing system for foreigners to complete their arrival cards, effectively improving the clearance efficiency for foreigners entering China through AOEs. This innovative measure can serve as a practical reference for Member States in optimizing their management of inbound passenger declarations.

CHINA'S INNOVATIVE MEASURE ON ARRIVAL CARD FILING FOR FOREIGNERS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In accordance with the compliance obligations under Annex 9, the National Immigration Administration (NIA) of China has continuously advanced the facilitation, digitalization, and intelligent upgrading of port clearance services. To support high-level opening up and fulfill its compliance commitments to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the NIA implemented, as of 20 November, 2025, the facilitation measure of online arrival card filing for foreigners at all open ports of entry (POEs) nationwide.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Overview of the Measure for Online Arrival Cards Filing for Foreigners

2.1.1 Background. As China's high-level opening up continues to advance, international air passenger traffic has steadily recovered. The traditional, fully paper-based on-site model for foreigners to fill out arrival cards can no longer accommodate the growing influx of international travelers. At major aviation hub airports, peak-hour congestion at immigration checkpoints has become common, undermining the clearance experience for foreign travelers. As a Contracting State of ICAO and a Member State of the ICAO Council, China has consistently adhered to the standards and recommended practices set forth in the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* and its Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. In line with the core directions of successive amendments to Annex 9 — such as promoting passenger pre-arrival declaration, reducing official paper documents, and optimizing immigration inspection procedures — China has adopted a three-tier model featuring online pre-arrival declaration as the primary channel, on-site smart filing as a supplementary option, and paper arrival cards for emergency backup.

2.1.2 Official Declaration Channels. Before arriving in China, foreigners can submit their entry information online through the official website of the NIA, the NIA Government Service Platform, the “NIA 12367” mobile application and its WeChat and Alipay mini-programs, or by scanning the arrival card QR code on their mobile devices. For those who are unable to complete online, they may submit their entry information upon reaching the immigration checkpoints at POEs. This can be done either by using their mobile devices to scan the on-site QR code, utilizing on-site kiosks, or by manually filling out a paper arrival card.

2.1.3 Seven Categories of Persons Exempt from Declaration by Law. In accordance with China's relevant exit and entry laws and regulations, foreigners falling under the following seven categories are exempt from declaration: (1) holders of the Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card of the People's Republic of China; (2) holders of the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese citizens); (3) holders of group visa or those eligible for group visa-free entry to China; (4) persons in direct transit within 24 hours who do not leave the restricted area of the port; (5) persons entering or exiting by the same cruise ship; (6) persons entering through the E-channel; and (7) foreign crew members of inbound and outbound transportation vehicles.

2.2 Outcomes of the Implementation of the Innovative Measure

2.2.1 Improved efficiency of border clearance for foreign travelers. Over the six months since the measure was implemented, over 15.55 million foreign travelers have completed arrival card filing through online channels. The rate of online self-declaration by foreign travelers at airports of entry (AOEs) across China exceeds 70%. At popular tourist POEs, an average of 3 to 5 minutes of clearance time has been saved per traveler, with the effect being particularly notable during peak hours.

2.2.2 Mutual enhancement of border security and green governance. The online arrival card filing initiative for foreign nationals represents an integration of efficiency improvement and security assurance. It not only significantly shortens clearance time but also strengthens risk prevention and control capabilities, achieving a balanced and unified approach to service and management. Furthermore, the substantial reduction in the printing and use of paper arrival cards not only conserves paper resources but also lowers costs associated with transportation and storage. This deeply integrates the concept of green development into the POE governance.

2.2.3 Improved experience for international travelers and a better business environment. Embassies and consulates of various countries in China, as well as overseas partner airlines, have reposted the guidelines for the online completion of foreigner arrival cards through the official channels. Travelers coming to China for business or tourism from multiple countries have shared positive feedback on overseas social media platforms regarding the convenience of the clearance process. This has contributed to the quality improvement of China's foreign-related business environment and its open environment for inbound tourism, which in turn benefits the expansion of bilateral civil aviation route networks.

2.3 Next Steps

2.3.1 Room for further promotion through official overseas channels. Due to the rapid growth of individual media platforms, foreign travelers may find it difficult to accurately identify the official sources of information. Illicit overseas third-party entities have frequently created counterfeit websites for foreigner arrival card completion and charged fees illegally. NIA has collaborated with foreign affairs authorities to issue risk alerts and publicize the sole official declaration channel on its official website and information screens at major international airports. It is also continuously working with overseas airlines to publicize legitimate declaration channels in advance.

2.3.2 Continuous advancement in upgrading the multilingual declaration system. In alignment with the long-standing standards of Annex 9 to serve diverse global travelers, the foreigner arrival card filing system currently launched by NIA already supports 13 languages, including English, French and Korean. Moving forward, NIA will continue to monitor the needs of travelers from various countries and regions, and optimize the system's functions in phases.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The implementation of the innovative online arrival card filing proposed by NIA represents an innovative achievement in fulfilling the standards set forth in Annex 9. This initiative meets multiple objectives, including those for security management, facilitation services, and green development. It serves as a mature practice of digital facilitation of border inspection procedures at AOEs, offering ICAO Member States a replicable and adaptable Chinese solution for facilitating entry clearance. NIA will continue to adhere to ICAO

standards, deepen the reform of port facilitation, participate in global aviation facilitation governance, and contribute to the safety, efficiency, and convenience of international civil aviation travel.

4.ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

4.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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