



**WORKING PAPER**

**SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE  
(ATCONF/7)**

**Montréal, HQ, 16 to 20 November 2026**

**Agenda Item 3: Strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks  
3.3: Strengthening emergency planning mechanism and consumer protection  
for a resilient aviation system**

**STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR AIR TRANSPORT  
CONTINUITY AND TEMPORARY OPERATION ARRANGEMENTS AT  
NEIGHBOURING STATES' AIRPORTS DURING CRISES**

(Presented by Kuwait)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper addresses the importance of establishing advance regional arrangements to support the continuity of air transport services when operations from national airports are not possible, thereby helping to maintain passenger and cargo movements, as well as air connectivity, and reducing the economic and operational impacts of crises and regional disruptions.

**Action:** The Conference is invited to consider the proposals in paragraph 5.

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Strategic Goal:</i>         | This working paper relates to the Strategic Goal: <i>The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All.</i> |
| <i>Financial implications:</i> | No direct financial implications.                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>References:</i>             | N/A                                                                                                                                                                             |

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper presents the experience of Kuwait in relying on airports in Saudi Arabia to temporarily operate national carrier flights during the period when operations from Kuwait International Airport were not possible. This experience highlights the importance of coordination among States to facilitate operational approvals, provide capacity and support services, and facilitate passenger and cargo movement.

1.2 Kuwait proposes promoting the development of a guidance framework for temporary operation arrangements, which States can adapt to their needs and agree upon in advance, taking into

<sup>1</sup> Arabic version provided by Kuwait.

account State sovereignty, relevant agreements, regulatory responsibilities, and safety and security requirements.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Crises and regional disruptions may lead to the suspension of operations at airports or restrictions on the use of airspace, affecting passenger and cargo movements and increasing the load on airports and air routes in neighbouring States. This may result in economic and operational impacts, disruption of supply chains, and a reduced ability to provide essential air transport services. Addressing such circumstances requires cooperation that goes beyond the immediate operational response to include regulatory, administrative, operational and commercial arrangements that enable affected carriers to continue providing their services temporarily from airports in other States, with the consent of the States concerned and under the supervision of their competent authorities. This paper seeks to propose a practical regional approach to plan for such arrangements in advance, with a view to facilitating their activation when needed and defining the responsibilities of the parties concerned, while maintaining safety and security and taking into account the capacities of host airports and the needs of their users.

2.2 During the extraordinary circumstances when operations from Kuwait International Airport were not possible, national carriers relied on airports in Saudi Arabia to temporarily operate alternative flights. That cooperation helped reduce disruption to air transport services and provided alternative travel options. Kuwait expresses its appreciation for the regional cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and particularly commends the facilitations provided by the concerned authorities in Saudi Arabia to host the operations of national carriers at its airports, which, in turn, supported the implementation of alternative operational arrangements and demonstrated the practical value of regional cooperation during crises.

2.3 This experience demonstrates that the success of temporary operations depends on the integration of regulatory approvals with the availability of capacity and ground services, and coordination among civil aviation authorities, airports, air carriers and relevant government entities. The key lessons learned include the importance of:

- a) establishing clear points of contact and rapid decision-making mechanisms among the States concerned;
- b) setting up advance arrangements for operational approvals and accommodating additional flights;
- c) linking flight-operation planning with arrangements to facilitate passengers and cargo access to host airports;
- d) providing passengers with information on alternative airports, flight schedules and travel procedures; and
- e) establishing arrangements that can be scaled up, modified or terminated according to on-the-ground developments.

## 3. MAIN AREAS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

### 3.1 Regulatory approvals and facilitation

3.1.1 Advance arrangements should define procedures for requesting and approving temporary operations, including permits, operational approvals and relevant traffic rights, and coordination concerning safety and security oversight responsibilities, in accordance with applicable agreements and legal frameworks. Such arrangements shall not result in the granting of automatic or permanent operational rights, or lead to a change in existing regulatory responsibilities, except as agreed to by the States concerned and in line with their legal and regulatory frameworks.

### **3.2 Capacity and time slots**

3.2.1 Accommodating additional operations requires the exchange of up-to-date information on the capacity of host airports, including runways, tarmacs, terminals, cargo facilities and support services. Time slotting, where applicable, should be coordinated in accordance with clear criteria and procedures that take into account extraordinary needs and existing operations, on the understanding that temporary arrangements will be reviewed based on changes in demand and available capacity.

### **3.3 Air routes and traffic flow management**

3.3.1 Temporary operations should be supported by coordinating available routes, airspace capacity and traffic flow management, through air navigation service providers (ANSPs) and competent authorities. This includes the exchange of operational information and civil–military coordination, where appropriate, to enable flights to be conducted safely and regularly and within the framework of applicable emergency arrangements.

### **3.4 Passenger movement and protection of their interests**

3.4.1 Arrangements should include coordination with the competent authorities concerning passenger entry, transit and transfer procedures to and from host airports, while ensuring clarity regarding travel requirements. Accurate and timely information should also be provided regarding changes to the airport of departure or arrival, rebooking, refunds and assistance, in accordance with applicable rules, taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities or reduced mobility.

### **3.5 Cargo, supplies and support services**

3.5.1 Arrangements should be provided to support the uninterrupted transport of cargo and essential supplies, including capacity, handling, storage, customs procedures and associated ground transportation. Requirements related to fuel, maintenance, crews, equipment and ground services should also be taken into account, ensuring unambiguous financial and commercial terms of the services provided during temporary operations.

## **4. PROPOSED REGIONAL FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Kuwait proposes urging States to conclude bilateral or multilateral arrangements for temporary operations from host airports, drawing on existing cooperation mechanisms and contingency plans, while avoiding duplication of roles and procedures. It is proposed that such arrangements include the following elements:

- a) scope of application and activation: Identifying situations that warrant temporary operations, a mechanism for requesting and accepting assistance, and entities authorized to take decisions;

- b) points of contact: Designating of national points of contact available around the clock, with alternative communication channels and a clear escalation mechanism;
- c) airports and available capacities: Identifying potential host airports and the requirements for their use, and updating data on their capacity and services;
- d) approval and coordination procedures: Identifying required information and documents and the responsibilities of the entities concerned, so as to facilitate the timely processing of requests without compromising regulatory requirements;
- e) information exchange: Agreeing on a mechanism for exchanging flight, demand, capacity and operational-constraint data, taking into account the confidentiality and protection of information;
- f) duration and return to normal operations: Determining the duration of temporary arrangements and the mechanism for extending, modifying or terminating them, and establishing coordinated procedures for returning to national airports; and
- g) testing and review: Conducting periodic exercises, assessing the speed of activation, adequacy of capacity and continuity of services, and updating the arrangements on the basis of the results and lessons learned.

4.2 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) could support this approach by collecting practices and lessons learned and developing a guidance framework or a model arrangement for temporary operations, that States could use and adapt to their needs, in coordination with the regional offices and relevant entities, and within the Organization's mandate and available resources.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) take note of Kuwait's experience in regional cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, including the temporary operation of national carrier flights from airports in Saudi Arabia, and the lessons learned in enhancing the continuity of air transport during crises;
- b) encourage Member States to establish bilateral or multilateral arrangements, ahead of any potential crises, to facilitate the temporary operation of affected carriers from airports in host States, with such arrangements covering the regulatory, operational and facilitation aspects referred to in this paper;
- c) invite ICAO, in cooperation with Member States and relevant entities, and within its mandate and available resources, to collect relevant practices and consider developing a guidance framework or a model arrangement for temporary operation, that covers, as appropriate, areas relating to activation, coordination, approvals, information exchange and the return to normal operations, drawing on existing guidance and mechanisms; and
- d) urge States and relevant regional groups to test said arrangements through joint exercises and exchange the results and lessons learned, thereby enhancing the preparedness of the air transport system and maintaining the safety, security and continuity of services.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Kuwait reaffirms that crises and extraordinary circumstances underscore the importance of regional cooperation and operational resilience in maintaining the continuity of air transport services. It also emphasizes that the availability of advance arrangements for alternative routes and airports, coordination on time slots and capacity, continuity of cargo and supply operations, civil–military coordination, together with the possibility of temporary operations by national carriers from airports in neighbouring States when necessary, constitute an integrated set of elements that can contribute to enhancing the ability of civil aviation to face extraordinary circumstances.

6.2 Kuwait reaffirms its readiness to continue to cooperate with ICAO and Member States and to exchange expertise and lessons learned, thereby contributing to the development of more flexible regional mechanisms capable of supporting the continuity of air transport, while maintaining the highest levels of security, safety and operational efficiency.

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