



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

PREPAREDNESS FOR MANAGING HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH AIR TRAVEL

(Presented by Saudi Arabia)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the experience of the Saudi Arabia in coordinating efforts between health authorities — namely the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Authority — and the General Authority of Civil Aviation to protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel, and to reduce the risk of transmission of diseases that may impact public health.

The paper also aims to highlight Saudi Arabia's high level of preparedness in managing health risks associated with air travel. This is demonstrated through the establishment of health surveillance centres at international airports, the continuous development of their capabilities, and the monitoring of their performance — positioning Saudi Arabia as a leading global model in this field.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- Recognize the importance of establishing a global framework to guide cooperation between the health and aviation sectors in cases of potential public health threats; and
- Request the International Civil Aviation Organization to develop training programmes for aviation personnel on identifying, reporting and appropriately responding to health risks, as well as ensuring proper protection measures for aviation workers.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal: Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All
<i>Financial implications:</i>	No additional financial implications.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Doc 7300, <i>Convention on International Civil Aviation</i> , signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 and amended by the ICAO Assembly, Article 22 World Health Organization. <i>International Health Regulations (2005)</i>

¹ Arabic and English versions provided by Saudi Arabia.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Recognizing the pivotal role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in safeguarding global health security, Saudi Arabia continues to enhance its capabilities for implementing these regulations. This includes enacting relevant legislation and mobilizing resources to protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel.

1.2 Amid growing challenges posed by the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics, the importance of collaboration between health authorities and civil aviation stakeholders becomes increasingly evident. Such collaboration is essential to develop integrated policies and appropriate implementation mechanisms that effectively reduce health risks while minimizing disruption to passenger movement and air transport operations.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Regulatory Frameworks

Saudi Arabia has developed a system of regulations aimed at minimizing cross-border health risks, including:

- Health Surveillance Law at Points of Entry;
- The Implementing Regulations of the Health Surveillance Law at Points of Entry; and
- The Unified Health Procedures The Manual at Border Crossings of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, 2.2 Health Requirements for Entry into the Kingdom.

2.2 Given the increasing number of travellers to Saudi Arabia, particularly for purposes such as Umrah and Hajj, health authorities continuously monitor and assess the global epidemiological situation related to public health threats. Based on risk assessment, they define health requirements for incoming travellers.

2.3 These requirements are shared with countries worldwide through various channels, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Health Organization and the General Authority of Civil Aviation. This multi-channel communication ensures that travellers can access up-to-date health information and supports compliance with entry regulations.

2.4 Health Capacities at International Airports

Saudi Arabia has established health surveillance centres at 14 international airports to serve as the competent authority responsible for public health protection, in accordance with Article 22 of the International Health Regulations. These centres coordinate with various stakeholders operating at airports, including airlines, to monitor the health status of passengers arriving from outside Saudi Arabia, detect and control health risks that may affect travellers during their transit through airports, and implement health procedures for passengers suspected of carrying diseases of public health concern, thereby ensuring the safety of other passengers and airport workers.

2.5 In addition, these centres are responsible for training airport personnel on protective measures when dealing with passengers, developing public health emergency preparedness and response plans, testing those plans through simulation exercises and drills, and updating them based on lessons learned. Saudi Arabia's health authorities continuously work to enhance the capabilities of these centres by providing ongoing training, ensuring the availability of necessary equipment, and monitoring performance through reports, statistics, and key performance indicators, while addressing any arising challenges immediately.

2.6 **Coordination Between the Health and Aviation Sectors**

Saudi Arabia has leveraged the International Civil Aviation Organization facilitation provisions and recommendations to strengthen coordination between the health and aviation sectors. The National Air Transport Facilitation Committee provides an effective platform for information exchange and continuous coordination, aiming to streamline passenger flows and respond to health-related challenges promptly and efficiently.

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