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Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

ESTABLISHING A RESOLUTION ON HIGH-LEVEL PRINCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE OF PASSENGER JOURNEY

(Presented by Czechia on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States¹, the other Member States of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)², Singapore, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL))

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the layers of restrictions being added to air travel during the recent global pandemic, States and stakeholders should resolve to actively improve the post-pandemic passenger journey by air travel, by ensuring a journey that is as safe, accessible, welcoming and seamless as possible.

This working paper thus presents common long-term vision, in the form of high-level principles for the future, to guide the actions of States and stakeholders as they strive for the common goal of delivering the optimal passenger journey.

Action: The Assembly is invited to adopt the resolution in paragraph 4 and incorporate it in the existing Resolution 40-16.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objective <i>Security & Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Resolution A40-16: <i>Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation</i>

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

² Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Member States of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), together with the industry stakeholders and other international organizations, should resolve to actively improve the post-pandemic passenger journey by air travel, by ensuring a journey that is as safe, accessible, welcoming and seamless as possible.

1.2 As the pandemic resulted in layers of restrictions being added to air travel, many aviation stakeholders are now reflecting on how to ‘build back better’ and strive to optimize the passenger journey to both minimize disruption and maximize predictability. While it is recognized that different stakeholders will have competing priorities — including but not limited to safety, security, anti-crime measures, border control, customs, revenue generation, space optimization, etc., it is clear that there are real benefits to be realized by establishing and adopting high level principles to deliver an improved passenger experience that is resilient to future potential disruption.

1.3 Inspired by the “ICAO Long-Term Vision for International Air Transport Liberalization”³, which was developed pursuant to the recommendation of the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference, it would be valuable for facilitation to also set a common long-term vision to guide the actions of States and stakeholders as they strive for the common goal of delivering the optimal passenger journey.

2. FACILITATION IS A KEY DRIVER FOR AVIATION RECOVERY IN POST-PANDEMIC SITUATION

2.1 In the short term, as we get nearer the point at which COVID-19 becomes endemic, we should build on the outcome of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) and the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations, together with the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) guidance material, to have the necessary organizational and legal environment in place to respond to the next health crisis. It is important to recognize that future outbreaks can take various forms of contagion and transmission; therefore, there is a need to define a common framework, which should instruct and guide both aviation authorities and the industry in the different stages of a global health crisis. Annex 9 — *Facilitation* should be amended and updated to ensure that the valuable lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic — and which would be generic to future health crises — are integrated into Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

2.2 We should, in particular, ensure that all COVID-19 related health measures in aviation are implemented when there is strong supporting scientific and risk-based evidence to do so and conversely, they should be lifted as soon as the situation allows. In the future, travel processes should be designed in such a way that they ensure a high level of protection of travellers' health that do not unnecessarily impair travellers in their travel experience. As stressed repeatedly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and as stated in the International Health Regulations, unnecessary interference with international traffic must be avoided. Therefore, it should be ensured, that health restrictions (such as certification, test outcomes) should not remain part of the passenger journey beyond a pandemic situation, unless necessary and scientifically justified.

³ <https://www.icao.int/sustainability/Pages/economic-policy.aspx>

3. HIGH LEVEL PRINCIPLES FOR ENSURING AN OPTIMAL PASSENGER JOURNEY

3.1 In shaping up the future of Facilitation, we should be guided by the need to ensure the highest levels of safety, security, fair processing and data-protection.

3.2 The future of the passenger journey should fully address the evolution of technology, in a secure and open manner, where innovative solutions — including digitalization to the extent possible — should bring benefits to all passengers. As emerging new technologies are already seen as a driving force for shaping the future of air travel, we should be able to share this vision with the aviation industry. Together, in alignment with the Technical Advisory Group on the Traveller Identification Programme (TAG/TRIP) strategy of ICAO, it is intended to leverage the latest technological developments to facilitate checks at borders, the verification of passports and visas, reduce queuing time, and to enable off-airport verification to address the predicted capacity constraints at airports and explore the possibility of intermodality with other means of transport to allow for more seamless journeys.

3.3 Furthermore, inclusivity should be considered at all stages of the journey to accommodate any additional needs of individuals and the technological capacity of signing states, ensuring that no country is left behind on such evolutions. Environmental considerations should also be factored into all stages of the passenger journey to save energy and prevent waste.

3.4 Finally, any evolution of the passenger journey should make it resilient to a variety of crisis scenarios, including health crisis and cyber risks, and support air transport for the future.

4. AN ANSWER TO FACE THE RAPID DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 In view of the very rapid developments in Facilitation, it is important that ICAO takes the necessary measures to ensure that the legal and practical framework is in place as soon as possible to ensure we can take advantage of developments. One of the answers to this challenge would be to have Facilitation Panel (FALP) meetings on a more regular basis so that any necessary changes to Annex 9 or to the guidance material could be undertaken quickly, taking into account the concrete and most recent evolution of the aviation sector. Situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic require a rapid and harmonized response. The current frequency of FALP sessions, i.e. once every two or three years, is not sufficient to deal with such situations. One FALP meeting per year should be considered, with the possibility of written consultations.

5. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

5.1 The Assembly is invited to adopt the following resolution and incorporate it in the existing Resolution 40-16:

Whereas the COVID-19 crisis has greatly hampered the facilitation aspect of air travel and where aviation is in a recovery phase, there is, more than ever, a need to ensure that the passenger journey is as safe, accessible, welcoming, and as seamless as possible. States and stakeholders must strive to put the passenger at the heart of the decisions related to airport and airline operations and seek continuous improvement;

Whereas we strive to constantly improve the passenger journey, we still have to take into account the external challenges that can impact this journey, including threats to security, illegal migration, human trafficking, travel document fraud, illicit narcotics trafficking and the spread of contagious disease. These are still global threats and everyday realities;

Whereas all stages of the passenger journey should be considered and evaluated against a clear and common set of high-level principles that should guide the building of an optimal journey; and

Whereas taking into account all the above, there is a strong need for the Facilitation Panel to meet more regularly in order to efficiently address and take decisions upon existing and potential future challenges;

The Assembly:

Adopts the following high-level principles for the future of passenger journey:

- a) Minimize disruption, maximize predictability and avoid unnecessary restrictions or bottlenecks throughout the passenger journey;
- b) Be inclusive to all passengers, non-discriminatory and take into consideration disabilities, reduced mobility and the equity of access to digital solutions;
- c) Ensure fair processing and safeguarding of personal data, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- d) Encourage sustainability with a constant optimization of processes to be energy efficient;
- e) Be resilient to disruption scenarios including those posed by health crises and cyber risks; and
- f) Strive for global interoperability across the journey and explore the potential of seamless intermodal travel; and

Recognizes the following tools as appropriate to achieve these high-level principles:

- a) Foster innovative technologies and processes with an emphasis on digitalization;
- b) Prioritize contactless processes as much as possible and increase off-airport checks, using trusted frameworks;
- c) Ensure better coordination between different authorities and stakeholders; and
- d) Increase the frequency of the Facilitation Panel meetings.