



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

FACILITATION AND CAPSCA CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT MEMBER STATES

(Presented by Qatar)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper presents the State of Qatar’s response for relief and recovery from the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance to international requirements, the State of Qatar utilized a series of strategies through risk mitigation measures to navigate and operate within this complex new normal.

This paper further highlights the importance of establishing an implementation programme through the *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative to further support Member States in the implementation of Facilitation (FAL) and Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) programmes respectively. Establishment of these programmes will provide vulnerable Member States with access to much needed guidance, resources and technical expertise to effectively establish, launch and implement a comprehensive facilitation committee in line with international and local requirements that support the CAPSCA elements and Communicable Disease Outbreak National Aviation Plan should any crisis arise that impacts the aviation industry in the future.

The time is at hand for the States to continue uniting our efforts towards rebuilding and restarting the industry as highlighted during the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021) and further to the Ministerial Declaration signed in October 2021. The State of Qatar is committed to this initiative and is pledging to assist the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), by leading the efforts of the working group to facilitate this very important mandate.

Our industry’s future and that of the sector relies on a unified commitment and political will by all States to support ICAO’s goal, focused on “One Vision for Aviation Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic”, to ensure No Country is Left Behind.

Action: The Assembly is invited to: consider the immediate establishment of a FAL and CAPSCA working groups supported by ICAO Member States under the ICAO NCLB.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives – <i>Security and Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The activities referred to in this paper will be undertaken subject to the resources available in the ICAO 2023 – 2025 Regular Budget and/or from extra budgetary contributions.
<i>References:</i>	ICAO CART <i>Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis</i> Annex 9 – <i>Facilitation</i> to the Convention on International Civil Aviation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the social and economic systems of all Member States. The pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work.

1.2 With the gradual lifting of entry restrictions, the world is slowly returning to a sense of normalcy. However, the crisis has had an enormous impact on the aviation industry, affecting passenger traffic, air cargo demand, airport workforce and revenues. Due to the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus, countries implemented stringent measures to contain the spread. Similarly, the State of Qatar implemented temporary ad-hoc restrictions on international travel as one of the measures to protect the health and welfare of its citizens and residents.

1.3 The State of Qatar committed to provide aid and other assistance to countries either directly or through its agencies or government owned companies and organizations. In our efforts to support ICAO Member States, the State of Qatar recognized that a strategic approach should be adopted by the Assembly to assist States in the implementation of all requirements relating to Facilitation and the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) through its Communicable Disease Outbreak National Aviation Plan. The State of Qatar pledges its support to lead the ICAO Working Group under the No Country Left Behind Initiative.

2. STATE OF QATAR'S RESPONSE

2.1 The State of Qatar responded swiftly to the needs of citizens and residents in order to manage the impacts of the growing pandemic. Qatar's Supreme Committee for Crisis Management spearheaded the development and implementation of a number of measures to ensure the safety of citizens and residents of Qatar and contain the spread of the virus. Our response to the epidemic followed the approach defined in the Qatar Vision 2030, which aims to attain optimum public health through implementation of sound and proven best practices in healthcare by utilizing cutting edge tools and the exceptional skills of healthcare professionals.

2.2 The Committee responsible for managing crises and disasters developed a suite of measures, rigorous full-scale testing and examination procedures incorporating international requirements, which provided a comprehensive framework for other agencies and companies, such as Hamad International Airport and Qatar Airways Group and its subsidiaries to effectively establish comprehensive strategies to maintain full compliance. Our strategy was consistently articulated through the State of Qatar's National Plan, which set an authoritative framework for collaborative action across various levels of government as well as its partners and stakeholders. The plan relied on the timely sharing of information to enable high quality decision making. Our results in this ongoing crisis were pivotal in maintaining a seamless, interconnected level of teamwork, professionalism and communication across health system and within the society at large. Our strategy as a State adapted, was to ensure that our healthcare system was never compromised or overwhelmed during any of the Covid waves. In fact, the State of Qatar's fatality rate of 0.15% was recognized as one of the lowest globally.

2.3 The safety, security and health of our citizens, residents, passengers and employees remained our highest priority with the integration of enhanced safety measures at our borders, the airports, our national carrier, subsidiaries, companies and agencies as follows:

- Provision of adequate medical facilities to provide effective care;
- Restricted entry protocols at Hamad International Airport for travelling passengers only;

- Thermal Screening for arriving and departing passengers;
- Implementation of mandatory facemask and COVID-19 requirements;
- Social distance protocols to incorporate 1.5-meter distance;
- Contactless check-in protocols;
- Controlled passenger disembarkation protocols;
- Introduction of digital applications;
- Enforcement of all required quarantine measures;
- Restriction of food and beverage operations to take-away operations;
- Hamad International Airport remained open for transiting passengers and cargo;
- Qatar Airways maintained operations as far as practically possible to provide air transport for passenger and freight;
- Integration of artificial intelligence with the introduction of mobile disinfection robots utilized inside and onboard our fleet, as well as baggage disinfection systems;
- Enhanced Business Continuity Planning protocols for all operations within and outside the State of Qatar in accordance with local, international and quality control standards;
- Allocation of sufficient hotels and facilities for quarantine of inbound citizens, residents and passengers; and
- Vaccination programmes were rolled out periodically and quarantine requirements were regularly updated for citizens, residents and visitors.

3. STATE OF QATAR'S RELIEF

3.1 We strongly stand by our belief that this global threat health requires a global response. Aligning with the call for solidarity made by WHO to help developing nations, the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), along with its partners such as Qatar Red Crescent, and Qatar Airways responded to their needs. Through this joint cooperation, we have successfully shipped aid to over 100 countries, including medical equipment, PPEs, and food supplies.

3.2 Our National Airline's response during the pandemic involved external and internal approaches in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to safeguard the health and safety of passengers and employees. Our mandate as a State was centered around "Connecting People and Moving Cargo". In response to restrictions and border closures Qatar Airways Group mobilised to facilitate critical air connectivity for passengers and cargo in the safest way possible. Their diverse fleet served as an advantage in adapting to various markets, which allowed effective and efficient operations to a wide range of destinations.

3.3 Throughout the stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Qatar and our national carrier worked closely with governments, embassies and companies focused on its fundamental mission of taking people home. A sample of our Global Cooperation was demonstrated as follows:

- Over 3.1 million passengers were taken home
- Over 550 charters and extra sector flights were facilitated
- Over 380,000 seafarers were transported
- Over 29,823,15 kg PPE transported worldwide

3.4 In response to the impact of COVID-19, Qatar Airways Cargo adapted to the requirements of customers to meet specific demands such as the transport of vaccines, as well as the formation and establishment of new partnerships with States, NGO's and International Organizations to help transport essential supplies, pharmaceuticals, perishables and other vital cargo around the world.

4. STATE OF QATAR'S RECOVERY

4.1 The State of Qatar remained responsive, consistent and safe since the start of the pandemic, leading the recovery of the aviation industry and supporting the global economy with more flights to international destinations than any other airline. We planned extensively for the lifting of restrictions to restore social activities, return to our daily lives, and revitalize our economy and our business sectors. Our team utilized scientific and other related information to develop and implement a multi-level tier plan on a phased approach. This concept was adopted by government and private agencies, as a guide to modify protocols and implement structured operation plans during the recovery and start-up of normal operations.

4.2 Our commitment as a State to efficiency and innovation continues to be our mantra, as we continue to stay at the forefront of new cutting-edge technological advancements. One such achievement was Qatar Airways' successful trial of the IATA Travel Pass 'Digital Passport' mobile application in partnership with Hamad Medical Corporation, which was used to enhance our passenger's safety and security. Our vigilance enabled us to take carefully targeted action in response to any resurgence of the infection. At the same time, however, we developed contingency plans, for the gradual re-introduction of restrictions should it be necessary.

5. STATE OF QATAR'S RECOMMENDATION

5.1 As we converge as one unified body at this 41st Assembly, it is imperative that No Country Is Left Behind and we should all seek to work together collectively ensuring we ensure that vulnerable Member States with gaps in their FAL and CAPSCA programs are resolved. Accordingly, we would like to request to the Assembly to urge the Council and to study the need to implement the following recommendations:

- Establish a FAL/CAPSCA Implementation Support Working Group
- Establish a FAL/CAPSCA Implementation Support Fund for Developing States
- Develop a FAL/CAPSCA Training and Workshop Plan
- Establish FAL/CAPSCA Onsite Expert Assistance Implementation Program

5.2 The State of Qatar stands ready to lead the FAL/CAPSCA Implementation Support Working Group.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The State of Qatar as a Member State of ICAO is committed to working closely with ICAO on this important initiative, and understands that every opportunity should be explored to bridge the implementation gap ensuring all States are fully prepared for any future crisis or event that may impact the aviation sector.

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