



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

ENHANCING COORDINATED RESPONSE TO MITIGATE GLOBAL CRISIS

(Presented by Bangladesh)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The effective coordination and management of diverse interests as well as the complex pattern of interagency collaboration make appropriate facilitation in a crisis situation a difficult task for any State. This paper highlights and tries to focus on the diversity of collaboration between the Industry, Civil Aviation, and Public Health Authorities.

Bangladesh believes that it is important to raise awareness among all the aviation stakeholders in the provision of Facilitation in crisis times. ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations helped the Member States in overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Non-compliance with relevant public health-related Annex 9 provisions also poses risks to an effectively coordinated civil aviation response to a pandemic.

Cooperation with Industry, States and International Organizations is the key to restarting air transport operations. A rapid response to public health-related global crises can be achieved by enhancing National Coordination and International Cooperation among States in managing risks.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) encourage States to enhance National Coordination and International Cooperation in managing risks of related public health and facilitation provisions during global crisis;
- b) encourage States to support the strengthening of the implementation of facilitation provisions and related activities through the establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms and corresponding human resources;
- c) encourage ICAO to develop in close cooperation with the WHO and CAPSCA experts, a guidance material for States that contains a list of WHO recommended Technologies/Equipment so that a harmonized implementation of such equipment in response to the similar outbreak of public health issues;
- d) encourage ICAO to support the strengthening of the Facilitation capabilities through establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms and resources to support CAPSCA so that the CAPSCA-AP can better support and provide better guidance should there be a similar outbreak of public health issues; and
- e) encourage ICAO to develop in close cooperation with the CAPSCA experts, a comprehensive framework to be followed in response to significant public health emergencies, with specific reference to a rapid initial response, ongoing monitoring during the evolution of the emergency, and enhancing national and international cooperation effectively.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to <i>Safety</i> , and <i>Security and Facilitation</i> Strategic Objectives
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not Applicable
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Doc 10160, <i>Report of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021)</i> ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 When the COVID-19 crisis hit air transport, the whole aviation sector was affected. The massive disruption to aviation activities and its financial impact have far-reaching effects globally. Many States were not adequately prepared to tackle the challenges imposed on them in the facilitation area.

1.2 Coordination amongst government agencies and industry stakeholders is essential means to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. States should take appropriate measures in a consistent, mutually-accepted, and harmonized way. The existing roles and responsibilities of government agencies, airlines and airports should remain the same.

1.3 Bangladesh has always been in close touch with various organizations locally and globally and provided guidance and best practices to the aviation stakeholders. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the facilitation area has focused on the idea that a substantially different approach should be taken at the strategic level.

1.4 Timely and accurate testing, as well as vaccination, remain critical in the global strategy to control COVID-19. Bangladesh with its political will, commitments and public health management capacity, has implemented the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 States are struggling to maintain aviation-related business continuity through the pandemic and trying to stimulate the aviation sector in an effective and sustainable manner while protecting public health and safety and restoring public confidence in air travel. Facilitation is an important component but difficult to manage endeavour during crisis times.

2.2 States must ensure the availability of financial and human resources that enable the safe and efficient recovery of the aviation section from the COVID-19 pandemic. ICAO's National Air Transport Facilitation Programmes (NATFP) are a proven means of a coordinated approach between all involved stakeholders in responding to a pandemic while maintaining appropriate safety and security requirements.

2.3 Bangladesh activated the high-level NATFC Committee, which was formed in 2018. CAAB has published COVID-19-related Advisory Circulars, NOTAMs and preventive guidelines. ICAO, WHO, IATA, ACI and CANSO have also provided technical assistance.

2.4 The Chairman, CAAB has played a vital role as the Chairperson of the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation in Asia/Pacific Region (CAPSCA-AP) in setting out a path of recovery from COVID 19 global crisis.

2.5 The COVID-19 pandemic did bring out unprecedented challenges for the air-transport sector, especially for in international operations. Like many other countries, Bangladesh also experienced certain challenges at the initial stages of the pandemic. Lack of public awareness, non-adherence to public health protocols and scarcity of resources were some of the diverse challenges Bangladesh had to overcome.

2.6 Forced exit of expats from many countries including Bangladesh contributed to the spread of coronavirus in Bangladesh. These moves acted in contradiction to the principles of international collaboration.

2.7 As we are gradually restarting our air transport operations with the guidance of ICAO, Regional Office and CAPSCA-AP, we take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the continued efforts of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Secretariat.

2.8 As air operations resume and increasing number of passengers are vaccinated or are naturally immunized, the risk of spread of COVID-19 is mitigated. States are now more equipped with knowledge and resources on taking appropriate actions to limit the spread of COVID-19.

2.9 In this regard, Bangladesh has taken a holistic approach to prevent the spread of COVID-19 disease with minimum disruption to aviation industry functions. It has provided various waivers/incentives to the air operators in keeping their operations ongoing during the pandemic. This timely action was appreciated by all the stakeholders.

2.10 We propose that regular discussions be made on the importance of a National Coordination and International Cooperation. We also propose recommendations to ensure a close cross-sectorial collaboration between relevant national, regional and international organizations responsible for or implement public health measures. The proposals are part of the ICAO CAPSCA Programme, and follow the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.11 The management of the regional CAPSCA programme is one of the many functions that ICAO's regional coordinators have but not the priority. An assessment task should be done in a timely manner to ensure that the work programme for the next triennium is appropriately supported and resourced.

2.12 In this regard, it is time for all of us to consider restructuring CAPSCA supported by ICAO in both financial and human resources, to ensure a successful framework for implementation at the borders of mitigation measures during public health emergencies by all ICAO Member States over the next triennia

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The collaboration between public health and aviation authorities is necessary to facilitate effective air transport operations. The lack of national air transport facilitation programs has shown its limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of National Air Transport Facilitation Programmes (NATFP) in many States may improve compliance with Annex 9 Standards. Such programs are critical steps to mitigate the effects of a similar public health-related occurrence in the future.

3.2 It is important for ICAO to continue activities to promote the implementation of Annex 9 provisions, through the delivery of online courses, engagement with international and regional organizations for the development of guidance material and identification of opportunities for assistance partnerships with donors.

3.3 It is to be noted that ICAO, Member States, and stakeholders all have resource limitations. In the worst-case scenario, should we be facing another situation of communicable disease similar to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting international air travel, we should be prepared to handle the crisis with an appropriate Policy at the State Level to ensure the availability of necessary Guidance Materials and capacity-building capabilities are ensured.

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