



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Outcomes of High-level Conference on COVID-19

**PROMOTING AVIATION RECOVERY BY ESTABLISHING A FORMAL MECHANISM TO
MINIMIZE CONFUSION OF AIR TRAVELLERS**

(Presented by the Republic of Korea)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 related entry and quarantine requirements or regulations vary from State to State based on each State's priorities and sovereignty. In addition, there are various sources of information in which air travellers can obtain details about quarantine measures. Such diversity and disharmony, which are one of the unexpected challenges, are now hindering the promotion of the aviation recovery as they cause confusion to air travellers in preparing documents that they need to enter the State they wish to enter, leading some air travellers to be denied entry for not meeting the requirements. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to efforts to identify and minimize the confusion that air travellers may experience during pandemic. This paper aims to present the need to establish a formal mechanism to minimize confusion of air travellers, and that the mechanism can be used as a means to promote the aviation recovery by facilitating air travel and strengthen the resilience to future crises.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize that minimizing the confusion of air travellers and thereby restoring the reliability of air travel is the first step toward promoting aviation recovery;
- b) suggest that International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) play a leading role in establishing an unified formal mechanism to manage, update and share the quarantine requirements and regulations of each States, enabling travellers to be aware of them when preparing for air travel; and
- c) encourage ICAO Member States to provide up-to-date information to ICAO on the quarantine requirements and regulations that air travellers shall comply with.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective <i>Security & Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Undetermined
<i>References:</i>	Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 “One Vision for Aviation Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic” HLCC 2021-WP/235 : <i>Report of the facilitation stream to the conference on Agenda Item 6, Recommendation 6/1</i> Doc 7300, <i>Convention on International Civil Aviation</i> , signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 and amended by the ICAO Assembly

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As aircraft operations have been suspended due to the unprecedented spread of COVID-19, international passenger traffic decreased by 60 per cent in 2020 and by 49 per cent in 2021, compared to 2019. However, travel restrictions have eased and global air operations have resumed with the increase in vaccination rates worldwide. ICAO forecasted that air traffic in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Southwest Asia and Latin America would be fully restored by the end of 2022. Asia-Pacific is expected to fully recover by 2023 or 2024, and Africa by 2024 or 2025.

1.2 The High-level Conference on COVID-19, which was held on October 2021 in the form of a virtual, adopted the ministerial declaration on *One Vision for Aviation Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic*, highlighting the importance of ensuring ICAO's support for the long-term resilience of international aviation by enhancing its crisis response capability.

1.3 This paper aims to present the need to establish a formal mechanism to minimize confusion among travellers using air transport during a pandemic, and that the mechanism can be used as a means to promote the aviation recovery by facilitating air travel and strengthen the resilience to better respond flexibly to future crises.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Many States, including the Republic of Korea, are making efforts to promote the recovery of air operations by establishing various mitigation policies according to their circumstances, such as eliminating outdoor mask mandates and exempting the vaccinated air travellers from quarantine.

2.2 Simultaneously, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which can occur through an influx of air travellers from abroad, many States are mandating inbound travellers to submit or present a COVID-19 vaccination certificate or a PCR negative confirmation, installation of an application recognized by the State, and enter health information.

2.3 Accordingly, air travellers must check and confirm the types of documents they need to submit, the scope of validity of the document, and quarantine guidelines of the State that they wish to enter, all of which they should be aware of before they travel, then submit or present them before boarding departure flights or during immigration screening upon arrival.

2.4 However, the regulations and procedures related to entry and quarantine that passengers shall observe are based on priorities and sovereignty of individual State, complying with Article 13 of the Chicago Convention, rather than being universal to every State. Entry and quarantine regulations, required documents for health information and the method of submissions vary from State to State.

2.5 In addition, there are various sources of information (e.g., public health agencies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and airlines) in which air travellers can obtain details about travel restrictions and quarantine measures, which causes confusion in checking the up-to-date information. Eventually, this leads air travellers to spend much time checking whether the information is valid and sometimes entry procedures are delayed because confused air travellers try to pass immigration without a QR code generated by mandatory health applications or a printed certificate of immunization, making them to spend more time at the immigration as they need to install the app or print the certification on the spot. In

the worst-case scenario, some air travellers can be denied entry for not meeting the requirements or for presenting incomplete quarantine-related documents.

2.6 In the case of the Republic of Korea, from 13 July 2020, when the submission of a PCR test certificate became mandatory, to 20 July 2022, 680 overseas entrants were denied entry for not possessing a PCR negative-result certificate, submitting a PCR certificate issued by an unauthorized agency or expired (the certificate must be issued within 48 hours of boarding departure flights).

2.7 International air transport is starting to recover through ICAO's significant efforts, as ICAO is establishing and distributing global guidelines (*Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis*, Doc 10152, *Manual on COVID-19 Cross-border Risk Management* that member States can refer to in order to resume international air transport and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. ICAO also alleviated the Standards in Annexes 1 and 6 and established its associated systems to support continuous air operations. However, as mentioned above, unexpected challenges exist, hindering the aviation recovery, which is why it is necessary to pay special attention to the confusion that air travellers experience and make effort to tackle the issue.

2.8 In this context, the Republic of Korea believes that it is important to minimize the confusion of air travellers by establishing a mechanism that enables sharing and updating of all crisis-related regulations and requirements in a timely manner, such as quarantine requirements, which ensures that travellers are aware of the information when they prepare for air travel. Therefore, the Republic of Korea proposes that ICAO considers establishing such a formal mechanism since it can be a key to restoring travellers' trust in the air travel and promoting aviation recovery by facilitating air travel with the most efficiency and least confusion that air travellers may experience at the initial phase of restoring air operations.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Faced with an unprecedented public health crisis, aviation personnel and air travellers have experienced disruptions due to major changes, which can be repeated in the event of a similar situation in the future. Therefore, the Republic of Korea believes that identifying and minimizing the confusion that various factors may cause is one of the most important crisis response measures to promote aviation recovery. This may as well be the "new normal" that the aviation sector should accept and embrace after the crisis.

3.2 Accordingly, recognizing that minimizing the confusion of air travellers and restoring the reliability of air travel is a first step toward promoting aviation recovery. The Republic of Korea proposes that ICAO play a leading role in establishing a unified formal mechanism to manage, update and share the requirements and regulations of each States that air travellers shall be aware of before they travel, such as entry-related quarantine guidelines and the documents required to be submitted or presented.

3.3 In addition, it is suggested that the Member States recognize the importance of minimizing the confusion and inconvenience that air travellers may experience and cooperate in providing ICAO with up-to-date information on the quarantine requirements and regulations that air travellers need to comply with.