



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE ASSOCIATED WITH COMMERCIAL AIRLINE TRAVEL

(Presented by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents measures to implement in response to future infectious disease outbreaks. These measures build on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused extensive harm, both economic and health-related, to those who operate, work, and travel on aircraft.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) consider the proposals described in this paper; and
- b) agree that the proposed measures be adopted

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to <i>Safety</i> , and <i>Security and Facilitation</i> Strategic Objectives
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	<i>Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis</i> , 4th Edition, ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (2021) HLCC 2021-WP-16, FAL/1 Presented by the Secretariat at the High-level Conference on COVID-19: Challenges in the implementation of risk-based public health mitigation measures in the course of rapidly evolving public health emergencies (2021) HLCC 2021-WP-18, FAL/3 Presented by the Secretariat at the High-level Conference on COVID-19: Aligning the national aviation plan concerning public health risk impacting aviation with other relevant emergency and disaster risk reduction plans (2021) WHO/WHE/2021.03: <i>COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan: Operational planning guideline</i> (2021)

¹ English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by ITF.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The rapid global spread and persistence of COVID-19 highlights the urgent need to develop global guidelines for States to implement in response to future health crises.

1.2 A slow and uneven response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowed for the spread of disease, which particularly impacted aviation workers. It also contributed to an even greater economic impact on the industry than would have been the case if a comprehensive, harmonized disease mitigation program had been implemented promptly and globally.

1.3 COVID-19 has caused extensive harm to those who operate, work, and travel on aircraft, as well as to the industry. The harm has been economic and health related. To ensure the adverse effects of future infectious disease outbreaks are better controlled, response measures should be implemented in advance. Those measures are outlined in this paper.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Airports, commercial aeroplanes, and public modes of transportation are all densely packed, enclosed environments where people from a myriad of global locations congregate and then disperse.

2.2 The inability to socially distance combined with other environmental risk factors and increased duration of exposure all increase the probability of airborne disease transmission.

2.3 Recognition of the impact of airborne transmission was delayed and uneven, allowing for significant transmission prior to mitigation measures being put in place.

2.4 During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a steep rise in the prevalence and disruptive nature of passenger misconduct incidents. Contributing factors include non-compliance with mask policies, alcohol consumption, and other health crisis-associated stressors.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that States prepare comprehensive disease mitigation programs in advance of future health crises and be prepared to implement them promptly and consistently. This would help to contain the spread of disease and minimize its economic effects.

3.2 The Assembly is invited to agree to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 7/xx — Health Crisis Response Program to mitigate transmission associated with air travel of a disease, causing a global health crisis.

That ICAO:

- a) Establish a working group to conduct an analysis of the work of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) and other relevant ICAO and WHO guidelines, as they apply to cabin operations, to study their effectiveness in mitigating disease transmission. Based on this review, develop and promote a harmonized health crisis response program for cabin operations intended to mitigate the transmission of disease during future health crises; and
- b) Ensure that States implement the health crisis response program at the onset of and during future health crises.