



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES GIVEN BY THE HLCC 2021 RELATING TO
THE REDESIGN OF MEASURES FOR ADDRESSING PANDEMICS IN THE FIELD OF
AVIATION**

(Presented by Colombia, co-sponsored by Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic,
Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper seeks to promote mutual support and cooperation among States in order to recognize individual mitigation measures taken to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel, in order to sustain the reactivation and uninterrupted provision of air passenger services using the tools and procedures suggested by the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) and aligned with the Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19.

Failure to unify measures aimed at mitigating the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel could indirectly impact the safety of an international flight, making it necessary to unite the efforts of States to mitigate this risk and ensure that common standards are used to maintain acceptable levels of operability in a safe environment.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the contents of this working paper;
- b) support mutual recognition of the mitigation measures adopted by States of origin and States of international destination to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel; and
- c) endorse or make such comments as it may deem relevant to this proposal.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objective of Safety.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Report 2021 Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 – October 2021

¹ Spanish version provided by Colombia.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 One of the priorities of ICAO is to strengthen cooperation among States to enable the safe and efficient recovery of civil aviation while managing health risks.

1.2 The work of the Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), established by the ICAO Council, has highlighted the importance of common standards for air transport, including the interoperability and mutual recognition of digital applications, and the importance of drawing lessons from the current pandemic to better address future crises.

1.3 The Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) has highlighted the importance of common standards for travel, including interoperability and mutual recognition of digital applications.

1.4 CART recommendations and guidelines have been promulgated and updated on the basis of the latest medical and operational advice, and are intended to harmonize and not replace existing COVID-19 recovery road maps developed by States, regions or industry groups.

1.5 The Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 recognized that all States are sovereign and responsible for their own public-health-related measures, and remain free to implement any risk mitigation measures if and when necessary, consistent with their national legislation and international obligations. However, the Conference urged that all passengers should benefit from fair and equitable treatment and the ability to travel, and that travelling solutions should be made available to or be appropriate for all passengers, taking into consideration access to and types of vaccines, so as to ensure that no country is left behind in the global aviation recovery effort.

1.6 The Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 expressed the commitment of States to take effective measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel, in particular by implementing the ICAO CART guidelines, and encourage the harmonization of Member States' multilayer risk-management strategies to safely restore international connectivity and support the revival of the global economy as a critical step towards achieving our goal to enhance the social, environmental and economic sustainability of aviation.

1.7 The Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19 expressed the commitment to pursue a multilayer risk-management strategy for international civil aviation, which is adaptable, proportionate, non-discriminatory and guided by scientific evidence in close cooperation and coordination with the public health sector, with agreed practices harmonized to the greatest extent possible, for air travel purposes, using commonly accepted epidemiological criteria, testing requirements and vaccination, and underpinned by regular review, monitoring and timely information-sharing among States.

1.8 The ICAO Ministerial Declaration, entitled "One Vision for Aviation Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic" (adopted in October 2021), resolved that ICAO and other stakeholders would work together "to ensure the interoperability and mutual recognition of, and accessibility to, digital applications, secure transmission and validation of pandemic-related testing, vaccination and recovery certification that protects privacy and personal data".

1.9 In March 2022, the Council of ICAO adopted a new set of international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). The new Amendment 29 to Annex 9 – *Facilitation* of the Chicago Convention, which will be applicable in November 2022, recommended that States should issue digital

vaccination certificates in line with WHO recommendations, and that the certificates should be interoperable with the specifications in the ICAO Technical Report on Visible Digital Seals for non-constrained environments (VDS-NC).

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 International travellers are currently subject to a series of individual procedures and requirements imposed by States of destination with respect to the individual measures adopted by those States to mitigate the spread by air of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel, which can sometimes create uncertainties about travellers' journeys, especially when intermediate stopovers are required before they reach their final destination.

2.2 International flights necessitate the consideration of alternate airports along the route, which requires crews to take into consideration the requirements established by the States in which those alternate airports are situated. This applies even more so to an **extended diversion time operations** (EDTO) flight, which might conceivably consider an airport that is not among those envisaged in its original flight plan route, thereby possibly giving rise to uncoordinated considerations between the flight control and the crew itself, with possible implications for safety. Hence, the requirements relating to measures mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel must now be added to the technical, operational, immigration and regulatory requirements, entailing additional considerations for crews, travellers and airlines.

2.3 The IATA short-term forecast published on 1 March 2022 noted that the total number of travellers was expected to reach 103 per cent of 2019 levels in 2024. The number of international travellers is expected to reach 101 per cent of 2019 levels in 2025. In this sense, it is imperative that the levels of recovery of the air sector, measured by the number of international passengers transported, should reach the projected levels by 2030.

2.4 In view of the foregoing, this working paper aims to have ICAO promote and encourage cooperation agreements and unification of approaches among States vis-à-vis individual measures adopted to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases in international air travel.

2.5 This proposal to encourage cooperation agreements and unification of criteria among States should be guided by the commitment embodied in the ICAO Ministerial Declaration entitled "One Vision for Aviation Recovery, Resilience and Sustainability beyond the Global Pandemic" (adopted in October 2021), being necessary to promote, to the greatest extent possible, a harmonized and inclusive approach to facilitating safe international air travel, including relief or exemption from testing and/or quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated or recovered passengers, taking into account the different circumstances of individual States and their national policies, in line with WHO policy and technical considerations for implementing a risk-based approach to international travel in the context of COVID-19.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The diversity of the approaches taken by States in their domestic measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel, could result in the absence of future growth of international air travel.

3.2 The States participating in the High-level Conference on COVID-19 assumed a commitment to promote, to the greatest extent possible, a harmonized and inclusive approach to facilitate safe international air travel, including alleviating or exempting testing and/or quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated or recovered passengers, taking into account the different circumstances of individual States and their national policies, in keeping with WHO policy and technical considerations for implementing a risk-based approach to international travel in the context of COVID-19, thereby strengthening the confidence of the travelling public and safely rebuilding international civil aviation.

3.3 On the basis of this analysis, it is proposed that ICAO encourage States to enter into agreements on the unification of approaches in response to the individual measures taken to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by international air travel.

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