



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Agenda item 35: Economic Regulation of International Air Transport – Policy

**EXPERIENCE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN THE REACTIVATION OF
AIR PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRANSPORT. RECOVERY OF TOURISM
AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

(Presented by Dominican Republic)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper presents the experience of the Dominican Republic in reactivating air passenger transport and in rebuilding tourism. The Dominican Government has worked to ensure the rapid, safe, reliable and sustainable recovery of international air operations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information presented; and
- b) promote among ICAO Member States the guidance on economic and financial measures to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on aviation, as contained in the Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective: <i>Economic Development of Air Transport.</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	No resources required.
<i>References:</i>	<i>Guidance on Economic and Financial Measures to Mitigate the Impact of the Coronavirus Outbreak on Aviation. December 2020. Version 1.2. Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Conference on COVID-19</i>

¹ Spanish version provided by Dominican Republic.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Civil aviation in the Dominican Republic is one of the economic sectors that has seen the greatest development and progress in recent years; it is a key component in the growth and development of tourism, and consequently one of the main drivers of the national economy. Since 2020 we have been significantly affected at the global level by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has set us an enormous challenge: to rebuild international air operations speedily, safely, reliably and sustainably. Faced with this challenge, it is safe to say that the Dominican Republic has made a historic recovery.

1.2 In this working paper, the Dominican Republic wishes to share its experience in reactivating air passenger and freight transport, as well as the measures that have aided and guided us in making our country a highly attractive destination, striking the best balance between the need to control the increase in positive cases of COVID-19 in the country and the need to keep our borders open in order to facilitate the recovery of civil aviation.

1.3 Various initiatives and measures have been implemented to reactivate air passenger and freight transport and rebuild tourism. The main ones are as follows:

1.3.1 The Civil Aviation Board (*Junta de Aviación Civil*, JAC), as the Government's advisory body and in coordination with all aviation sector agencies, issued a "Protocol to Reactivate Air Services in the Dominican Republic", with five subsequent updates, describing the national aviation sector's efforts, based chiefly on an in-depth analysis and contextualization of the measures recommended by the health authorities and the national and international organizations that regulate civil aviation. It included measures needed to reduce the public health risk for air passengers and aviation workers, while at the same time strengthening trust between the travelling public, the global supply chain and the Government. It also covered measures applied in the airport sector across the country to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3.2 An effective vaccination plan was implemented for all whose livelihood depends on the tourism sector (aviation authorities, hotel employees, restaurants, taxi companies and product suppliers) in order to guarantee that destinations are safe.

1.3.3 In line with central Government policy, it was decided, for the duration of the state of emergency, to suspend the collection of arrears from airlines for late payment of fees and charges, and based on this measure, arrangements were agreed with at least 20 domestic and foreign airlines to enable them to pay their arrears in instalments and thereby continue operating.

1.3.4 We developed and applied the principles of an open skies commercial aviation policy, as exemplified by the approval of 13 commercial cooperation agreements between airlines of several nationalities, which encouraged visits by tourist passengers from less traditional areas, thus impacting tourism and the national economy.

1.3.5 Between August 2020 and May 2022 the Civil Aviation Board approved 62 new routes to various destinations worldwide, a sign of the confidence that airlines and tourism companies have placed in our country.

1.3.6 As part of the air transport policy, which is based on the liberalization of traffic rights, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC) to grant Seventh Freedom of the Air traffic rights for freight-only flights, in order to promote easy access to markets and growth in trade, together with the transport of vaccines and medical materials and equipment during the pandemic.

1.3.7 In September 2021, in order to streamline entry and exit procedures and reduce the time passengers spend at airports, the electronic entry and exit form (e-Ticket) was implemented; this uses QR (Quick Response) code technology and is a free, environmentally friendly document, geared towards good practices of sustainable development, respectful of commercial civil aviation, accessible at all times and now available in seven languages. It is completed online before going through immigration. It replaces two paper forms relating to immigration and customs and covers public health requirements.

2. OUTCOMES

2.1 Vaccination

2.1.1 By January 2022, 100 per cent of the country’s tourism-sector personnel had received two doses of vaccine and by June 2022, 80 per cent of those employed directly or indirectly had had at least one third vaccination against COVID-19.

2.2 Flight, route and passenger-traffic authorizations

2.2.1 A total of 26,415 air operations have been authorized, both non-scheduled and charter flights; of these 11,868 were passenger and combined operations, 10,046 were freight-only operations and 4,501 were special flights to test new routes.

2.2.2 Five million inbound and outbound passengers had been expected in 2021 but, as a result of the measures taken by the Dominican Republic authorities, the year closed with 10,753,720 passengers, rounding off with the best fourth quarter (Oct-Dec) in history, with a total of 3,379,475 inbound and outbound passengers and marking a 75 per cent recovery compared to 2019 (Pre-pandemic year).

2.3 Passenger traffic January-June 2022

2.3.1 This year we have logged the best second quarter (April-June) in our country’s history, with a total of 3,891,827 arrivals and departures, notwithstanding the global impact of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (the original forecast was around 700,000 arrivals and departures).

2.3.2 The projection for 2022 is to close with 15 million inbound and outbound passengers and a 100 per cent recovery of air services compared to 2019.

MONTHLY PASSENGER TRAFFIC FROM/TO DOM. REP. August 2020-June 2022



Source: Dominican Civil Aviation Institute database

2.4 Air freight

2.4.1 In 2021, the transport of goods by air (exports and imports) totalled \$7.019 million, an increase of 29.4 per cent over 2020 (pandemic year), and also exceeding the total freight value of 2019 (pre-pandemic year) by 18.7 per cent.

CIVIL AVIATION BOARD AIR FREIGHT TRANSPORT (FOB US\$) 2017-MAY 2022



2.5 Contribution to the economy

2.5.1 As a result of the measures taken by the Dominican Republic, 22.8 million passenger movements were registered from August 2020 to June 2022, in 174,825 inbound and outbound air operations; this translates into estimated direct and indirect revenue for the country of US\$ 3,959 million, \$9,926 million and \$7,092 million dollars in 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively, and an overall total of \$20,978 million, plus the recovery of more than 400,000 direct and indirect jobs.

2.5.2 If 2022 closes as expected, with 15 million passengers, we will exceed the 2019 passenger total (14.4 million) by 5 per cent; civil aviation's contribution to the Dominican gross domestic product (GDP) would thus be an estimated \$14 billion in direct and indirect income, or 14 per cent.

2.5.3 On 9 May 2022, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognized the Dominican Republic as the world leader in tourism recovery. The Dominican tourism model stands out for having brought about the industry's most successful recovery, logging record figures in tourist arrivals.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 As a result of the measures taken by the Dominican Government in the area of civil aviation, always observing ICAO standards and recommended practices and LACAC recommendations, the Dominican Republic has not only proved itself resilient by overcoming the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as reflected in the number of passenger and aircraft movements, but has also shown great leadership in the region, setting national records even in the wake of a pandemic and the conflicts that have erupted around the world.