



Agenda Item 2: Presentation of initiatives for recovery and actions taken by States

ROLE OF CAPSCA IN THE SARS 2 COVID-19 CRISIS

(Prepared by Aerocivil of Colombia)

SUMMARY

This working paper presents and highlights the role of CAPSCA as an instrument to assist States and as a focal point for cooperation among civil aviation authorities and public health authorities, particularly the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), becoming the facilitator that air transport currently needs for the development of communication strategies to disseminate reliable information on the risk prevention and safe travelling efforts made by the civil aviation sector to recover the confidence of air transport users. It must also build upon the lessons learned from past contingencies and turn the current situation into learning opportunities that will allow for continuous improvement in the sector. At present, Latin America urgently needs coordination to allow for an orderly, safe, and sustainable reactivation of air transport.

ICAO strategic objectives

- Safety
- Security and facilitation
- Environmental protection and sustainable development of air transport

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In December 2015, a mission of the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) visited Colombia to take a look at the El Dorado international airport, and made an assessment of public health emergency services. As a result of that mission, Colombia received a positive report. The Pan American Health Organization Disease Prevention and Control Area also participated in this visit.

1.2. The Pan American Health Organization is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system, led by the Organization of American States (OAS), and works under the framework of the World Health Organization (WHO - <https://www.paho.org/en>). At present, this organization, through its offices, is in permanent contact with the health authorities of each government in Latin America, and is fully collaborating to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

1.3. The Pan American Health Organization has developed a response strategy with two main objectives: to curb the spread of the virus and to mitigate the health impact of COVID-19 in the Region. Its role is very relevant for civil aviation because of its participation in CASPCA and its knowledge of the local conditions of each country.

1.4. The joint statement issued on 6 March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) reasserts collaboration among organisations, especially between ICAO, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Airports Council International (ACI) to protect the health of travellers and reduce the risk of transmission.

1.5. The statement highlighted the role of ICAO as provider of information on COVID-19 for aviation purposes, and as a key facilitator of effective collaboration and coordination between States and organisations members of the CAPSCA programme and all the sectors involved.

1.6. There is an urgent need all over the world for a coordinated response by international civil aviation to public health risks in terms of prevention and management. Accordingly, CAPSCA becomes an essential mechanism for coordination among Latin American States, as set forth in the joint statement, and for integrating our efforts with those of the Pan American Health Organization, thus improving cooperation and coordination among aviation and public health authorities.

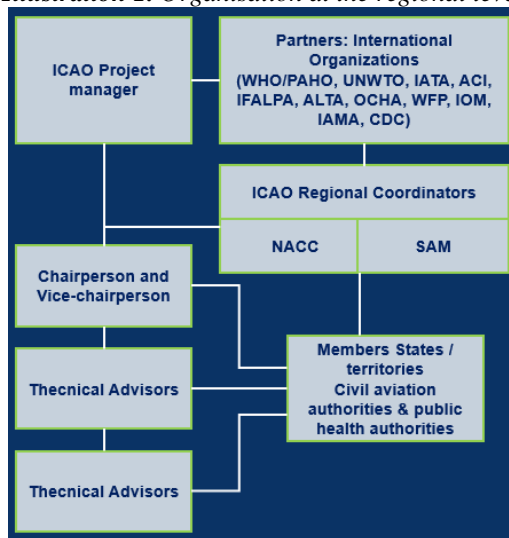
2. DISCUSSION

2.1. CAPSCA is an instrument for assisting States, but basically it has the mandate of cooperation between civil aviation and public health authorities, extending this obligation to airports, air navigation service providers, and airlines, thus becoming a focal point for biosecurity issues.

2.2. COVID-19 and the response to it have been accompanied by an overabundance of information, some sources more accurate than others, which makes it difficult to have reliable sources and guidance. However, when consulting CAPSCA website, we find very relevant information for planning the actions required in the civil aviation sector. (<https://www.capsca.org/CoronaVirusRefs.html>)

2.3. The programme is led by the head of the ICAO Aviation Medicine section and there is a coordinator in each Regional Office. This applies to the Mexico and Lima Offices. The States appoint the chairperson and technical experts contribute their knowledge to CAPSCA.

Illustration 1. Organisation at the regional level



2.4. The benefits currently derived from CAPSCA are:

- i. A multi-sector frame of reference and a network of different actors that contribute to the reactivation of air transport.
- ii. A formal point of contact with the Pan American Health Organization and with the health system, an essential element to move towards reactivation.
- iii. COVID-19 guidance and continuous monitoring of biosecurity schemes, plans, preparedness, and management of aviation response to the pandemic.

iv. Inputs on aviation measures in Latin America, offering a communication strategy to better manage the perception of risk by the public, the passengers, local authorities, and the system as a whole.

2.5. Resolution A37-13 urged States to participate in CAPSCA, reasserting the need for their support, as later recalled at the various global meetings of CAPSCA, underlining the need to continuously improve the way in which we coordinate and collaborate.

2.6. It is crucial to support CAPSCA, especially when, upon assessing public health measures implemented to control the outbreak, we note that 37 of the 52 countries and territories in the continent have implemented restrictions to international travel, including the closing of borders, suspending international travel in 25 countries, according to data provided by the Pan American Health Organization.

2.7. We propose that CAPSCA become the depository of lessons learned and that it contribute to their dissemination, which is essential for continuous improvement, as was done with the safety management system (SMS) in aviation.

2.8. We urgently need to implement strategies to communicate civil aviation efforts for risk prevention, in order to have broad dissemination of easily accessible and reliable information to potential and future travellers, and to provide advice on public health best practices to be implemented in our aviation system, all supported by evidence-based information resulting from the interaction between CAPSCA and the Pan American Health Organization.

2.9. We must recall that we are waging a huge battle against COVID-19; that much work has been done to contain COVID-19; and that civil aviation is capable of adapting and being neutral. This crisis requires that we pool efforts. We are worried about the reactivation of aviation, but it is fundamental that we unite around CAPSCA, understanding what our contribution can be, and how we can leverage its activities as a focal point for coordination.

3. SUGGESTED ACTION

3.1. The Virtual meeting of civil aviation directors of SAM States is invited to:

- a) take note of the information presented in this working paper;
- b) support the efforts made by CAPSCA, as a mechanism of coordination, assistance and pooling of efforts, towards coordination between civil aviation and health authorities;
- c) communicate this initiative of local public health authorities, as a reference of global coordination against the pandemic;
- d) request the ICAO SAM Office to encourage a closer contact between CAPSCA and the Pan American Health Organization at the Pan American level, as an instrument of support and collaboration to leverage individual efforts.

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