



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

(Presented by Paraguay)

SUMMARY	
<p>This paper presents the initiatives and actions taken by Paraguay to mitigate the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), based on the guidelines of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, following WHO and PAHO assessments.</p>	
<p>References: -Ley N°836/1980- Sanitary code -Epidemiological Alert N°1/2020-General Health Directorate, Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare -Decree N°3442/2020 Implementation of preventive actions to address the risk of spread of COVID-19 at the national level.</p>	
ICAO objectives:	<i>strategic</i> <i>A – Safety</i> <i>C – Environmental protection and sustainable development of air transport</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the recommendation of the Emergency Committee, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak as a public emergency of international relevance. Geneva/ Washington, 30 January 2020 (OPS)-

1.2 The Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) recommended that countries step up their plans to prepare for, and respond to, the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) disease in view of the emergence of new cases in the Americas, Washington, DC, 26 February 2020 (PAHO)-

1.3 The WHO characterises COVID-19 as a pandemic. On 11 March 2020, the Director General noted that “WHO has been assessing this outbreak all day long and being deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction, WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterised as a pandemic”.

1.4 Washington, DC, 18 March 2020 (OPS)- The Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) made an appeal to all the countries of the Americas to adopt immediate measures to reorganise their health services and protect health professionals, so that they can safely look after patients with the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) disease and save lives.

1.5 Washington, DC, 3 April 2020 (OPS)—The Director of the Pan American Health Organization, at the Virtual Meeting of the COVID Action Platform of the World Economic Forum for Latin America, called for the collaboration of the private sector with countries of Latin America and the Caribbean “in response to the tsunami of COVID-19 cases that we will be facing”.

2. Discussion

2.1 Action taken by governmental institutions in relation to COVID-19

2.1.1 The General Health Directorate, which reports to the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, has issued Epidemiological Alert N° 01/2020 on Coronavirus (COVID-19), which is currently spreading over several countries, following the recommendation made by the World Health Organization: «Countries are encouraged to continue improving their preparedness to face health emergencies in accordance with the International Health Regulations (2005)».

2.1.2 On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was a public health emergency of international concern. Accordingly, the Executive adopted a number of measures aimed at protecting the health and safety of citizens, in an attempt to curb the progress of the disease and strengthen the public health system.

2.1.3 The status report of 4 March 2020, issued by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), states that: «In the past 24 hours, two (2) countries of the Americas reported their first COVID-19 cases: Argentina (1) and Chile (1). Both cases were related to trips and are in stable condition. To date, a total of 119 COVID-19 cases from eight (8) countries and two (2) overseas territories of France have been reported: Argentina (1), Brazil (2), Canada (33), Chile (1), Ecuador (7), Mexico (5), Dominican Republic (1), United States (66), Saint-Barthelemy (1) and Saint-Martin (2). Furthermore, United States reported that 48 persons had tested positive for COVID-19 among those repatriated from Wuhan, China (3) and the Diamond Princess (45). A total of nine (9) deaths due to COVID-19 have been reported in the Americas, all from the State of Washington, United States».

2.1.4 In face of the risk of spread of the disease within the country, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has called for the urgent activation of the National Respiratory Virus Response Plan 2020, and established the Emergency Operations Centre of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, with the purpose of mitigating the impact that Coronavirus (COVID-19) might have on the national population.

2.1.5 In response to the Epidemiological Alert N°1/2020 issued by the General Health Directorate, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare issued Decree N°3442 on 9 March 2020, for the implementation of preventive actions to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) to the national territory, in accordance with the National Respiratory Virus Response Plan 2020, approved by resolution of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

2.1.6 Decree N°3442/2020 stipulates that all the entities of the Executive, the Armed Forces, the National Police and other units of the central administration shall cooperate with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare in the implementation of the National Respiratory Virus Response Plan 2020.

2.1.7 In view of the risk of spread of the disease to the national territory, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has called for the urgent activation of the National Respiratory Virus Response Plan 2020, and established the Emergency Operations Centre of the Ministry to mitigate the impact that

Coronavirus (COVID-19) might have on the national population. This was done through Resolution N°90 dated 10 March 2020.

2.1.8 The Secretariat of Public Function, which reports to the President of the Republic, through Resolution N°146 of 11 March 2020, approved the protocol for the implementation of preventive measures to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in State organisations and entities.

2.1.9 The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, through Decree N°3451/2020 of 12 March 2020, establishes a work schedule for public administration, as a measure to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2.1.10 Decree N°3456 of 16 March 2020 declared the State of Health Emergency to monitor compliance with the health measures set out in the preventive actions to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the national territory.

2.1.11 Decree N°3456/2020 authorises the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare to order the general preventive isolation for sanitary reasons, for a period to be defined by said health authority, between 20:00 hours and 04:00 hours.

2.1.12 The Ministry of the Interior, by Decree N°3458 of 16 March 2020, ordered the partial and temporary closure of migration control posts at the borders to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), while the state of health emergency declared through Decree N°3456/2020 lasts.

2.1.13 Article 2 of Decree N°3458/2020 clarifies that this will not affect individuals in transit arriving in international flights, the free circulation of cargo, or border trade through authorised posts.

2.1.14 The decree also specifies that entry will only be allowed to nationals and foreigners residing in Paraguay, members of diplomatic missions and international organisations who are authorised to enter the country.

2.1.15 Decree N°3458/2020 of the Ministry of the Interior applies to the following entities of the State: Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare; the Armed Forces; the National Police; the National Customs Administration, the National Navigation and Port Administration; and the General Directorate of Migration, which will coordinate with each other the actions to be implemented and will communicate thereof to their peers of neighbouring countries.

2.1.16 On 17 March 2020, the Ministry of the Interior issued Decree N°3465 extending Article 3 of Decree N°3458 of 16 March 2020, providing for partial and temporary closure of migration control posts at the borders to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2.1.17 Decree N°3475 of 19 March 2020 authorised the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare to coordinate the plans and activities of the services under its responsibility, of the Social Security Institute, the *Hospital de Clínicas*, the Military Hospital and the Police Hospital “Rigoberto Caballero”, for the provision of care services and distribution of resources in the health sector within the framework of the health emergency declared to curb the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the national territory, in accordance with the protocol established to this effect by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

2.1.18 The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, through Decree N°3478 of 20 March 2020, extended Decree N°3456 and established sanitary measures within the framework of the health emergency declared to address the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the national territory.

The decree provided for general preventive isolation for sanitary reasons all over the national territory, from Saturday 21 March 2020 (00:00 hours) to Saturday 28 March 2020.

2.1.19 Decree N°3478/2020 also provides for general preventive isolation from 29 March 2020 to 12 April 2020 from 20:00 hours to 04:00 hours and instructed the Public Forces to enforce the decree.

2.1.20 On 28 March 2020, Decree N°3490 modified Article 1 of Decree N°3478/2020, regarding general preventive isolation from 29 March 2020 (00:00 hours) to 12 April 2020, within the framework of the health emergency declared in the national territory (COVID-19) and extended Article 2 of said decree.

2.1.21 The Legislative Branch, through Law N°6524 of 26 March 2020, declared the state of emergency all over the territory of Paraguay in light of the COVID-19 or Coronavirus pandemic declared by the World Health Organization, and adopted administrative, fiscal, and financial measures.

2.1.22 The State entities affected by Law N°6524/2020 within the context of the health emergency are the following: Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Secretariat of National Emergency, the Technical Secretariat of Economic and Social Development Planning, the National Anti-Corruption Secretariat, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Social Security Institute, the *Hospital de Clínicas* (National University of Asunción), the Police Health Services, the Institute for the Indigenous People of Paraguay, the National Environmental Protection Service, the National Electric Power Administration, *Petróleos Paraguayos*. The Executive may specify other institutions to which this law applies.

2.1.23 The Ministry of Finance issued Decree N°3506 of 31 March 2020 to regulate Law N°6524/2020 “That declares the state of emergency throughout the territory of Paraguay in light of the COVID-19 or Coronavirus pandemic declared by the World Health Organization, and establishes administrative, fiscal, and financial measures”. The decree also stipulated regulations and procedures.

2.1.24 On 9 April 2020, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare issued Decree N°3525 extending the general preventive isolation (quarantine) and restriction measures from 13 April to 19 April 2020, within the context of the health emergency declared in the national territory due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Accordingly, the movement of individuals and vehicles was completely restricted for that period of time, in accordance with the measures set forth below:

“During the aforementioned period, all inhabitants shall remain in their customary residence or in the residence where they are located, and will only be able to do minimum indispensable outings to buy food, medicines, or cleaning supplies”:

2.1.25 On 14 April 2020, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare issues Decree N°3532 modifying item 7) of Article 2 of Decree N°3525, dated 9 April 2020, which exempts individuals and vehicles involved in public and civil works from transit restrictions, as follows:

“”7) Persons involved in the execution of public works”.

2.2 **Action by the civil aviation authority of Paraguay in relation to COVID-19**

2.2.1 At the request of the General Customs Directorate that falls under the Ministry of the Interior, as a general preventive isolation measure within the context of the health emergency declared in the national territory in light of the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the temporary closure of

borders was established for non-resident citizens, reducing the number of authorised border crossings for the entry of nationals, resident foreigners, members of diplomatic missions and international organisations authorised to enter. This was determined by Decree N°3458/2020 of 16 March 2020.

2.2.2 In order to comply with the provisions established by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, DINAC must adopt all relevant measures, without prejudice to any subsequent measures that might be required, to help the central government to protect the population against the health threat looming over it, following, in this regard, the recommendations of health authorities in the sense of minimising clustering of individuals to avoid viral spread.

2.2.3 Pursuant to Decree N°3442/2020 of 9 March 2020, the National Directorate of Civil Aviation issued Resolution N°273 on 12 March 2020 establishing temporary suspension of all classroom academic activities and training flights in all civil aviation training centres from 13 to 26 March 2020, extendable based on the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, as preventive measure in light of the risk of spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2.2.4 In light of the European continent being highly affected by the COVID-19 virus and pursuant to the preventive measures issued by the national government, DINAC issued Resolution N°274 establishing the temporary suspension of direct, commercial, and general aviation flights from Europe to Paraguay and *vice versa*, starting 00:00 hours on 14 March to 24:00 hours on 26 March 2020, extendable based on the relevant provisions issued by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, as a sanitary measure to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2.2.5 On 12 March 2020, DINAC issued Resolution N°280 for temporary suspension of registry deadlines established in the regulations of the National Aeronautical Registry DINAC-R47 and other related regulations related to petitions submitted and which are currently pending analysis and registration. This suspension became effective from 12 to 26 March 2020, extendable based on what the Ministry of Public Health decides regarding preventive isolation measures.

2.2.6 Pursuant to Decree N°3458 of 16 March 2020, the aeronautical authority of Paraguay (DINAC) issued Resolution N°286 of 16 March 2020, establishing restrictions to the disembarkation of non-resident foreign passengers by domestic and foreign airlines providing scheduled and non-scheduled international air services for commercial air transport, from 00:00 hours of 18 March to 30 March 2020. This restriction was published in the established aeronautical information system.

2.2.7 Resolution N°286/2020 excludes Paraguayan passengers, both natural or naturalised, foreigners residing in Paraguay, as well as members of accredited diplomatic missions and international organisations authorised to enter the national territory. Also exempted are flight crews, which must follow the relevant procedure in a timely fashion, based on the provisions to be established in this regard by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, as a sanitary measure to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2.3 **Initiatives of the Paraguayan State regarding the economic impact of COVID-19**

2.3.1 Due to restrictions imposed by the government on non-residents, airlines have seen a decrease in the number of passengers carried, and initiatives have been considered through the civil aviation authority (DINAC) to somehow mitigate this.

2.3.2 Being concerned about the economic repercussions that start to affect the institution and thus the airlines as a result of the reduction in the number of passengers caused by restrictions imposed by States due to COVID-19, the National Directorate of Civil Aviation has requested the President of the

Republic to issue a decree for exemption from charges and fees contemplated in Decree N°8701/2012 “whereby charges and fees for the provision of aeronautical, airport, meteorological services and other means of obtaining resources by DINAC and its modifications are established and updated”.

2.3.3 Following the initiative to alleviate the economic situation of airlines, the Executive issued Decree N°3468 of 18 March 2020, providing for the “*exemption of airlines operating scheduled national and international commercial air transport flights from payment of charges for flight protection, operation, and aircraft parking services contemplated in the chapters on Air Navigation and Airport Services of Decree N°8701/2012 and its modifications by the National Directorate of Civil Aviation (DINAC)*”.

2.3.4 The exemption specified in Decree N°3468/2020 is effective from 18 to 26 March 2020, extendable based on relevant provisions issued by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, as a sanitary measure to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The effective period was extended through Decree N°3513 of 3 April 2020, for a period of sixty consecutive days as established in Decree N°3468/2020.

2.3.5 Likewise, the civil aviation authority has started a number of work meetings with representatives of the airlines operating in the country and the National Tourism Directorate to define post-COVID-19 strategies to gradually reactivate air operations in the country. This is aside from the special government group that is working for the reactivation of the economy and the definition of lines of action.

3. Discussion

3.1 Paraguay acknowledges and congratulates ICAO for its initiative to compile, in a collaborative manner, a basket of measures for the recovery of civil aviation in the region, in response to the COVID-19 crisis that all the States of the region are facing.

3.2 It is also important to take into account that, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the States are using all the economic and financial resources to curb the spread and protect the population.

3.3 Currently, there are several cost-sharing projects in the region, which, due to the pandemic, are not performing their activities geared to the specific objectives for which they were created. It might be a good idea to use one of these projects to implement the actions required for the recovery of civil aviation in the region. But in this endeavour, all government entities involved in the adoption of measures should be allowed to participate, since COVID-19 response plans are being executed with specific objectives, structures and resource management schemes that involve all government levels.

3.4 Taking into account the information provided in section 2 of this paper, it can be inferred that all the States of the region have identified and applied different strategies and actions to address and mitigate the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), with different timings, reflecting the need for better regional coordination and harmonisation of such measures.

4. Suggested action

4.1 The Virtual Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the initiatives and actions taken by Paraguay regarding COVID-19;

- b) support the initiative of ICAO regarding the project presented in WP/03 by the Secretariat.
- c) consider the possibility of using one of the existing regional projects to implement the proposal for post-COVID-19 recovery of civil aviation in the region.

- END -