



International Civil Aviation Organization

South American Regional Office

**Fourth Virtual Meeting of Civil Aviation General Directors of the  
South American Region on the Response to COVID-19**

(Lima, Peru, 11 December 2020)

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### Agenda Item 3: Logistics and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in SAM States

## PREPAREDNESS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF VACCINES IN THE SAM STATES

(Presented by Secretariat)

### SUMMARY

This working paper provides information on vaccine distribution and logistics mechanisms, highlighting information provided by the Pan American Health Organization on the COVAX mechanism in the region. The objective is to raise awareness and identify what the role of Civil Aviation Authorities and service providers might be in this logistical challenge to respond proactively if any intervention is necessary.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 After the uncertainty about the impact of the pandemic and the ongoing efforts of ICAO, WHO/PAHO, Industry and States to reactivate air transport, new challenges have to be faced. One of them is the distribution of vaccines, which have certain particular characteristics for their transport without interrupting the cold chain, so that they can reach the different destinations from the points of production and be administered to the entire population of the world in a short period.

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 To date ICAO, PAHO/WHO, Industry and States have been working proactively to better understand the challenges in the civil aviation sector and possible articulation needs on the part of ICAO. The SAM Regional Office held a meeting with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on 24 November 2020, which sought to discuss and anticipate the prospects for the distribution of vaccines in the region and be prepared to respond to possible problems in support of the Industry and States in the preparation for addressing distribution challenges.

2.2 This meeting discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the air transport industry, worldwide and in the Americas region, stressing that, in addition to the health measures taken by the sector to rescue society's confidence in air transport, immunization of people through the vaccine is the greatest hope for a return to normality. At the same time, as the distribution of vaccines to the entire world population is a major challenge for all, the aeronautical industry turns to be an important player in obtaining the desired success in this distribution.

2.3 It also emphasized that the understanding of logistics and main challenges in vaccine distribution is important before assessing the way of collaboration for distribution by each stakeholder, and that ICAO is committed, within its possibilities, in providing all the necessary support in this task.

2.4 PAHO highlighted their knowledge in the distribution of vaccines under the global access mechanism for Covid-19 vaccines (COVAX) purchased by the programme, emphasizing their wide experience in vaccine distribution. However, they indicated that some difficulties might be presented in the process in the region, such as obstacles when nationalizing shipments and keeping the cold chain.

2.5 As priorities for the distribution of vaccines in States some points have been highlighted, such as:

- Infrastructure
- Storage capacity for COVID-19 vaccines and others vaccines
- Giving priority to vaccines and associated products
- Prioritise flights having restrictions for air transport
- Cold chain management during the flight and in the transit(s)

2.6 On the other hand, it is important to take into account that the States National Air Transport Facilitation Committees constitute a very useful tool in improving processes and coordination between the different entities involved, as well as in raising awareness with industry, freight companies, health authorities, customs and all other stakeholders.

2.7 Considering the above, the Aeronautical Authorities of the States are urged to be aware, according to their different areas of competence, of the following concerns regarding the distribution and reception of the COVID-19 vaccine from the air transport point of view :

#### **Challenges:**

- Transport temperature:
  - ✓ Low temperatures
  - ✓ Border inspections can affect the cold chain
  - ✓ Need of dry ice
  - ✓ on board lithium batteries
- Optimize traceability (flight path tracking)
- Anticipate the need for greater cargo capacity
- Efficiency in connectivity from origin-destination
- Non-expected transits or waiting times
- Documentation needed to avoid opening containers (cold chain)

#### **Mitigation:**

- Optimize ATC services and establish appropriate policies and procedures
- Study of current capacity at points of origin, transit and destination

#### **Main issues:**

- Industry involvement and collaboration
- Standardization, transparency and collaboration with the procedures.
- Cooperation of all entities involved with respect to the flexibility of exemptions due to the need for cooperation between States

3. **SUGGESTED ACTION:**

3.1 Recommend to the Fourth Virtual Meeting of Civil Aviation General Directors of the South American Region:

- a) to take note of the information presented in this working paper;
- b) to assess the States preparedness for vaccine distribution, and to anticipate the necessary proactive actions to address the distribution of vaccines in the States.

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