



Agenda Item 4A: Initiatives for the Development and sustainability of air transport in the Region

CAPSCA PROGRAMME IN AIR TRANSPORT

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY	
<p>Through the following working paper, the importance of the exchange of information and collaboration with the public health authorities is presented to the meeting, to strengthen health security in the States. In addition, efforts to control public health threats require all stakeholders to adapt to new challenges to continuously improve respective coordination and collaboration, taking into account the conclusions of the High Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC). 2021).</p> <p>Its objective is to encourage the States of the region to consider and promote the activities of the ICAO CAPSCA Programme in the framework of air transport as a fundamental tool for the recovery of international civil aviation.</p>	
<p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005</i> - <i>Article 14 of the Convention of International Civil Aviation</i> - <i>Annexes 6, 9, 11, 14, PANS-ATM (Doc 4444 – Air Traffic Management) y Doc 9284 Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air Corrigenda/Addenda/Guidance only</i> - <i>Assembly Resolution A38-WP35</i> - <i>Doc 10160, High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (Montréal, 12 to 22 October 2021). Report</i> - <i>Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis (TOGD)</i> - <i>ICAO Electronic Bulletin EB 2023/6, 16 January 2023</i> - www.capsca.org 	
ICAO Objectives:	<p>Strategic</p> <p>A: <i>Flight safety</i> B: <i>Air navigation capacity and efficiency</i> C: <i>Aviation security and facilitation</i></p>

1. Introduction

1.1 CAPSCA was established in 2006, following the crisis caused by the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic, as a multisector platform where the aviation and public health sectors pool resources, experience and knowledge to facilitate preparation for public health events in civil aviation

and their management. The CAPSCA network covers ICAO (83% of members are Member States), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other United Nations (UN) entities, international aviation organizations, civil aviation administrations and global, regional and national public health organizations. This makes possible to agree on guidelines and procedures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on civil aviation without losing sight of the paramount priority of preserving operational safety.

1.2 According to the International Health Regulations (IHR - 2005), States must implement the basic capacities and temporary recommendations during a Public Health Emergency of International Importance - PHEIC (i.e. Ebola or COVID-19) and periodically report progress to the WHO.

1.3 Other considerations that States must keep in mind is that the "implementation" of the IHR is still ongoing; therefore, States must maintain the basic capabilities required in the IHR and be able to use them effectively, when and where necessary (i.e. Ebola and COVID-19). In this sense, States, service providers and other interested parties must cooperate to build such capacities.

1.4 The High Level Conference on COVID-19¹ (HLCC), which was held virtually from 12 to 22 October 2021. In total, 1,786 members and observers appointed by 129 Member States and 38 international organizations, as well as advisers and other 56 Ministers and Vice-Ministers and 24 heads of international organizations attended the Plenary Ministerial sessions of the Conference.

1.5 **High level conference on COVID-19 (October 2021)**

1.5.1 The adopted Declaration that demonstrates solidarity and determination to face the challenges of COVID-19, and conveys a strong "message" to international communities and world economies, these recommendations accepted by the ICAO Council and the 41st Assembly.

Main results:

- ✓ Develop proposals to implement recommendations and proposals to improve the level of implementation of Annex 9 Standard 8.17, in collaboration with CAPSCA to avoid duplication or replication of activities;
- ✓ liaison with the FAL and CAPSCA Panels and ICAO Directorates, to design a framework for audits and assistance for capacity building and a mechanism for the implementation of the health-related SARPs of Annex 9; and
- ✓ Some of the important topics to develop are: ensuring early commitment in the event of a PHEIC, assuming political leadership, coordinating intersectoral collaboration, investing in pandemic preparedness, developing robust communication systems, making decisions supported by science and, based on evidence, identify stakeholders, build on existing response frameworks, identify essential operations and their priorities, use/adapt international mechanisms and tools to help cope with the event, standardize measures internationally when consensus is difficult to achieve international, among other results.

1.5.2 From December 6 to 8, 2022, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) together with the International Health Organization (WHO), held a regional meeting attended by representatives of 32 of the 35 Member States of the Region of the Americas; the agenda included the exchange of experiences, group work and plenary discussions.

1.5.3 The first day of the event was dedicated to reviewing the reports submitted to the WHO based on the Self-Assessment Tool Annual Report (SPAR). The sub-regions held an active debate on the

¹ https://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLCC2021/Pages/default_es.aspx

experiences of the countries in SPAR and on the use of information for decision-making. The delegates reviewed the profile of their States and each sub region using the report prepared by the Secretariat of 10 tracer indicators that allowed an approximate analysis over time (2010-2021) and 35 indicators for 2021.

1.5.4 The second day focused on coordination capacity (SPAR C2) with different sectors. Eight countries shared their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to review coordination links to ensure their continuity and sustainability, institutionalizing the processes.

1.5.5 The third day was dedicated to reviewing the scope of the border health capacity and points of entry (SPAR Capacity 11). The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and WHO shared the Memorandum of Understanding signed between both organizations as an important basis for continuing future collaboration. The importance of strengthening border health strategies in the countries of the Americas was also raised.

2. Discussion

2.1 CAPSCA Post-COVID Pandemic

2.1.1 It is recognized that the ICAO CAPSCA Programme, together with Facilitation, were key components in the efforts to maintain the continuity of aviation-related operations during the pandemic. Taking into account the diversity of topics covered in confronting the pandemic and the recovery of operations, States are encouraged to consider evaluating and proposing actions to develop and/or support Public Health Emergency Plans in their States and define clear objectives. Also, they are encourage to take into account for its future actions the EB 2023/6 dated 16 January 2023, on the "Risk assessment prior to the establishment of requirements due to COVID-19 for Air Transport".

2.1.2 Eighty-three percent (83%) of ICAO Member States are member States of the CAPSCA Programme, although during the pandemic many non-member States shared experiences and lessons learned during COVID. The programme assists States and industry with the implementation of ICAO SARPs and the WHO International Health Regulations, through:

- ✓ collaboration at international, regional, national and local levels;
- ✓ building capacities; and
- ✓ considering aviation operations and practicality.

In the States, the program encourages maintaining a relationship between aviation and public health so that the Civil Aviation Authority is dedicated to:

- ✓ worry about the health of aviation personnel and passengers;
- ✓ to operational safety;
- ✓ the continuity of air travel; and
- ✓ to mitigate the risk of transmission of infectious diseases through air transport.

And the public health authority to:

- ✓ respond to public health medical emergencies within an airport facility;
- ✓ the continuity of public health medical services;
- ✓ public health medical care at airports and on board aircraft; and
- ✓ mitigating the transmission of infectious diseases through air transport.

2.1.3 The Programme in the South American Region has carried out initial assistance visits, jointly with representatives of the WHO/PAHO, and follow-up visits to all the States of the Region. In addition, it has developed global and regional meetings, having carried out the corresponding coordination with a State of the Region, which is awaiting confirmation to hold the next CAPSCA America Meeting in the month of August 2023.

2.2 **CAPSCA in the future: Applying lessons learned**

CASAG (COVID-19 Aviation Scientific Assessment Group) is working on the development of:

- ✓ risk indicators;
- ✓ methods to measure the effectiveness of the measures;
- ✓ an escalation of criteria and flexibility of measures; and
- ✓ a risk assessment framework for all types of public health emergencies

The Innovation Group is working on:

- ✓ improve existing tools;
- ✓ develop new tools;
- ✓ a global digital platform; and
- ✓ development of telemedicine.

Providing guidance on:

- ✓ updating the Cross-Border Risk Manual;
- ✓ develop a new CAPSCA manual;
- ✓ develop customizable templates for response to public health events;
- ✓ specific measures for aviation personnel; and
- ✓ Specific measures for the passenger.

In the Creation of capacities in:

- ✓ all kinds of public health emergencies;
- ✓ new staff training and training modules; and
- ✓ an updated I-Pack

Preparing for Assistance/Assessment Visits at:

- ✓ the search for funds;
- ✓ the search for virtual focus areas;
- ✓ guided assistance visits; and
- ✓ On-site certification.

2.3 **ICAO participation in the Regional Meeting of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) jointly with the International Health Organization (WHO)**

2.3.1 After the presentation made by ICAO and, later, in the final report of the event, it was recognized that the specific actors to face a Public Health Emergency of International Concern are WHO/PAHO and ICAO through the Authorities of Public Health and the Civil Aviation Authorities of the States, whose activities are related to the IHR. However, it should be noted that the IHR is an instrument of the States parties and not of the aeronautical industry or other entities, but there are commissions created to collaborate and work with certain international organizations, such as ICAO.

2.3.2 Although many State agencies participate in the implementation of the IHR, the measures to be taken are the responsibility of the State public health regulatory bodies, who must ensure that unnecessary measures are not taken and/or that the measures taken follow the WHO/PAHO recommendations.

2.3.3 It was also considered that the public health regulatory bodies of the States are the ones that are responsible for agreeing on the best way to act in the event of a pandemic. Also, the need for

coordination between the different sectors of the State was confirmed in order to ensure the application of measures in the health sector that affect other sectors/entities of the same.

2.3.4 In the ICAO presentation, the signing of the ICAO/WHO Memorandum of Understanding in November 2022 was highlighted, and it was mentioned that there is a WHO committee working in coordination with the ICAO Aeronautical Medicine Section to develop and plan future activities between both international organizations.

2.4 **Public Health or Sanitary Corridor - PHC**

2.4.1 Existing cooperation mechanisms may not be sufficient to implement bilateral or multilateral agreements between States during public health emergencies, especially when there are several States and multiple sectors involved. Future public health emergencies may require different considerations in light of different epidemiological scenarios or different types of public health events. There is a need for the development of a comprehensive multi-scenario framework for implementing the PHC during public health emergencies on a more harmonized and timely manner and to develop/build resilience for the future.

2.4.2 CAPSCA recommends the use of the concept of "sanitary corridor" to allow the development of flight operations with minimal restrictions, at the same time, prevent the spread of diseases through air transport, and protect the health and integrity of crews and the public user. The sanitary corridor concept was developed based on risk, taking into account operational safety management principles. Since it is not possible to completely eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19 in air transport, the risk for crews and the traveling public can be significantly mitigated by applying the concept of sanitary corridor.

2.4.3 Seeing the need for training to be able to standardize the implementation of the PHC (Public Health Corridor) developed during the Pandemic, ICAO has created the iPack PHC, which is available to all States that wish to acquire the package. Up to now, they three States of the SAM Region have benefited with this assistance: Chile, Uruguay and Peru, with excellent results.

3. **Conclusion**

3.1 The States should consider the issues presented in item 2 of this working paper and develop actions to strengthen their Response Plans to a Public Health Emergency of International Interest in their States, as a policy for the development of air transport.

3.2 The High Level Conference on COVID-19² (HLCC) provided the opportunity for States to present their experiences and comments to strengthen aviation resilience and make it more sustainable in the future.

4. **Suggested action**

4.1 The Seventeenth Meeting of Civil Aviation Authorities of the SAM Region is invited to:

- a) Take note of the importance of the CAPSCA Program for the confrontation of States after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b) urge the Civil Aviation Authorities to develop training programs for experts on the subject of the CAPSCA Program and actively participate in all its activities, including the Regional and Global Meetings;

² https://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLCC2021/Pages/default_es.aspx

- c) analyse the report of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 and make proposals that can promote and strengthen collective initiatives for the harmonization of measures in the States of the SAM Region, give initiatives on how the CAPSCA Program should be strengthened;
- d) actively participate in the CAPSCA Group and collaborate in the development of an implementation strategy for the CART recommendations together with the recommendations of the Public Health Authorities in their States, the recommendations of the High-level Conference on COVID-19, 19 and, with the ICAO Electronic Bulletin - EB 2023/6, 16 January 2023;
- e) States that have not yet applied for PHC iPacks are encouraged to do so, as they are highly beneficial for their States and for Regional standardization, and to implement their public health corridors bilaterally, multilaterally, or regionally; and
- f) States are encouraged to request technical assistance from ICAO to verify their Emergency Plans in the event of a Public Health Emergency of International Interest.

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