



ICAO

**Seventh Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI/7)
(Virtual – 5 November 2021)**

**Agenda Item 4: Update on the safety initiatives by States, Regional Organizations, Industry
and Partners, especially under the context of COVID-19**

**STATUS AND EXPERIENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH AND
FACILITATION OPERATIONAL MEASURES RELATED TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN
THE AFI REGION**

(Presented by the EAC CASSOA)

SUMMARY	
<p>This Working Paper presents the status and experience on the implementation of CART health and -related recommendations in the AFI Region. Apparently, there has been achievements that have been registered despite the challenges in crucial areas of concern that requires improvement and strategic collaboration in the continent. The AFI States demonstrated commitment in implementing the CART recommendation by adopting regional or sub-regional harmonized approach despite the variability imposed by the health authorities in the AFI States. This has been a major challenge in various sub regions. However, as much as possible, the RSOOs has played a key role in ensuring that operationalization of harmonized measures are promoted in support of recovery post COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	
<p>This paper also highlights on the status of implementation of CART III in particular, the support functions provided by the RSOOs and the importance of AFI States on continuing reliance over and honoring existing regional arrangements for purposes of ensuring smooth implementation of pandemic related measures whenever it recur in the future. It is also imperative that these harmonized measures are in sync with the CAPSCA framework.</p>	
<p>Action by the Meeting in paragraph 3.</p>	
Strategic Objective	A, D, E

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), through the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), resolved to partner with its member States, international and regional organizations, and industry to address the challenges faced by the aviation system and to provide global guidance for a safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the aviation sector.

1.2 The emergence of ICAO CART Phase III has constrained AFI States to continue imposing additional meaning measures as well as managing difficult trade-offs associated with health, economic and social challenges experienced by individual States. The resources available in response to emergency needs have continued to dwindle and often characterized by high political, administrative pressure and urgency. In more pronounced situation is the variability that emerged due to States deviation from proposed regional harmonized measures. Experience shows that despite the coordinated efforts at regional settings, States continued to separate publish measures at different occasions. It is therefore imperative that all the AFI States implement the ICAO CART Phase III recommendations and guidance in a harmonized manner taking note of the latest development of the COVID-19 particularly on testing and vaccination.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 There is diversity in the preventive and control measures instituted by different AFI States especially for border control and travel such as post arrival mandatory quarantine, pre-entry border testing, and presentation of COVID-19 PCR negative test certificate. The recent development in border re-opening and easing of travel restrictions with diversified measures put in place by States or group of State as a pre-requisite to travel are affecting travelers while putting in jeopardy the good intention on reviving the economy while minimizing the risk of increased transmission.

2.2 In order to ensure a trusted and safe travel, AFI States are urged to ensure compliance implementation of existing regional treaties, guidelines and recommendations aiming at promoting health, facilitation, security and economic development. The compliance will ensure each AFI States takes their responsibilities to facilitate smooth travel, movement of people and goods within and across borders by deploying consensus-based measures.

2.3 There is need for continuous harmonization of pre-entry and exit requirement (mandatory quarantine, testing, and post travel tracking and contact tracing) across the globe through continuous engagement, providing guidance based on available evidence and data as well as availing technical support for standardization of different measures put in place. The harmonization will facilitate smooth travelling experience, maintain the public health safety corridor, common recognition of measures in place, mutual trust, and promote integration and collaboration among AFI States.

2.4 With regard to the development of **National Air Transport Facilitation Programme**, some AFI States have developed or at least drafted the Programme documents in line with ICAO Doc 10042. Thus, the National Facilitation Committees (NATFCs) have not been established accordingly. However, some alternative measures have been taken by States. These measures include but not limited to the establishment of the following:

- a) High-level Inter-sectoral Committee for the coordination of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b) Technical Committee for the coordination of the actions taken by Public Health Authorities and Civil Aviation Authorities;
- c) Operational Committee for the coordination between public health authorities and partners from relevant organizations;
- d) COVID-19 airport committee for the coordination of the actions taken at the airport.

2.5 In some States NATFCs have been established but are ineffective and there is a lack of involvement of many stakeholders, including Public Health Authorities. Thus, all stakeholders, including Public Health Authorities, should be sensitized on the NATFP, in particular the public health issues in civil aviation.

- 2.8 The use of paper-based Passenger Locator Forms (PLF) is not suitable for mass application as exploiting information entered manually on paper forms is tedious and requires a significant quantity of resources, especially when traffic density is high. Deployment of regionally agreed digitization of PLF and vaccination validation status should be implemented to improve efficiency and comfort among traveling public as well as reducing costs associated with PCR retesting on arrival.
- 2.9 A data driven mechanism through use of electronic collection of data, web-portal or any other tool, should be deployed and operationalized by AFI States in order to enable seamless and contactless travel. The AFI States should promote the use of innovation and technology within the African continent to harmonize the requirement, timely transmitting of critical information across borders including the testing results and foster coordination among different key players.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note on the status, achievements and challenges in AFI States towards implementing harmonized health protocols in line with the ICAO CART recommendations;**
- b) encourage AFI States and RSOOs in Africa to continue promotion of harmonized measures for purposes of improving efficiency and facilitate safe gradual recovery of aviation activities in the region; and**
- c) encourage AFI States to promote cooperation and collaboration through the regional or sub regional settings especially on pandemic related digitization measures in line with CAPSCA framework and global industry best practices**