Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH

NIGERIA – ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

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Dr. Wilfred Haggai

General Manager, Aeromedical Standards Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) & Team Lead, Technical Advisors CAPSCA Africa Project

Objectives

- Background
- Activities
- Achievements
- Lessons learned
- Conclusion
- Recommendations/Next Steps

Background

- Nigeria has five international airports, three of which are designated
  - Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos
  - Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja
  - Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano
- Given the interconnectedness of the global community, diseases can easily cross borders through travel and trade.
- By implementing control measures, Nigeria was able to mitigate the risk of the importation or exportation of COVID-19 during the pandemic.
- Effective interventions at points of entry played a crucial role in preventing the international spread of communicable diseases other than COVID-19 e.g. Lassa Fever.

Background

- Public health interventions at points of entry are vital for early detection, containment, prevention, and rapid response to infectious diseases.
- Nigeria has benefited from WHO Joint External Evaluation (JEE) and several CAPSCA assistance visits/follow-up visits which resulted to the following:
- Better coordination between the CAA, PHA, Airport Operator, ANSP and other stakeholders at the POE during the pandemic
- Capacity development at the POE
- Development, validation and testing of
- Public Health Emergency Contingency Plans (PHECPs)
- Implementation of IHR provisions at POE
- Effective coordination with IHR Focal Point
- Meetings of National Air Transport Facilitation

Committee (NATFC) as provided in Annex 9.

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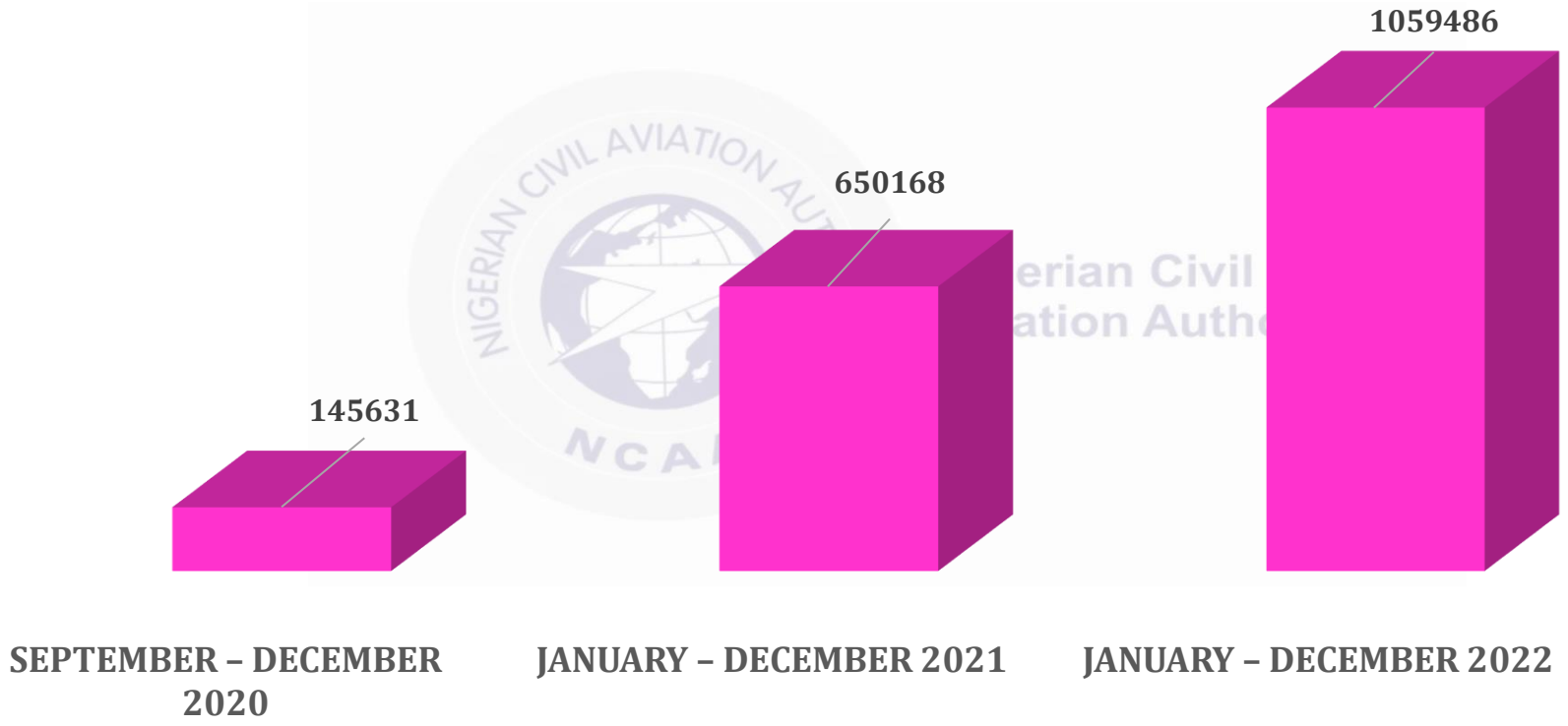
Passenger Traffic (Sept 2020–Dec 2022)

Total No. of Arriving Passengers screened at POEs



Activities - Nigeria's Response to COVID-19

- In January 2020, a team of experts was constituted by the Federal Ministry of Health to conduct a risk assessment for the country when COVID-19 was reported in China.
- A multisectoral team, using the One Health approach with stakeholders from the Federal Ministry of Health (PHA and NCDC), Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Federal Ministry of Environment, Federal Ministry of Aviation, (NCAA, NAMA, FAAN), Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Custom Services, WHO, USCDC, PHI and other relevant stakeholders & Partners.
  - The result from the risk assessment carried out, assisted in the formulation of policies, plans and guidelines for managing COVID-19 Pandemic.
  - Nigeria also relied on ICAO, WHO, and ACI documents (CART, CAPSCA, and manual on testing and cross border risk management, and IHR 2005) in the development of national/POE guidelines and risk mitigation policies and strategies.

Activities - Nigeria's Response to COVID-19

- With the declaration by WHO of COVID-19 as a Pandemic:
- A High-Level Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 was set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria which was made up of the following:
- SGF (Chairman), Ministers of Health, Aviation, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Information, Interior, Education, Social development, National Coordinator (Secretary), Director General NCDC, Executive Director National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Director General State Security Services, WHO country representative and a Secretariat.
- The PTF responsibilities were to:

- Develop guidelines and best practices for COVID-19
- Establish a national budget and determine funding sources for Nigeria’s response to COVID-19
- Determine key national policy and enforcement measures
- Ensure national security and
- Manage negative economic impact of COVID-19.

Activities - Nigeria's Response to COVID-19

- The PTF Incident Management Command (IMC) was headed by a National Incident Manager and Ten functional Pillars and sub-groups namely:
- Case management, Epidemiology & Surveillance, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), Laboratory, **Point of Entry**, Resource Mobilization, Risk Communication and community engagement, Security Logistics and mass care, State Coordination and Govt. Relations, Sustainable development and Research.
- **POE pillar at National Level** was headed by the Director Port Health Services with alternate as General Manager (Aeromedical Standards), Nigeria CAA.
- **PTF Technical Working Group –** NCDC, **POE** (**PHS & NCAA)**, NPHCDA with WHO supporting – Carries out regular **country multilayered risk-based assessment** and advice the governing council of the PTF. The technical advice was utilized in the development of National COVID-19 Quarantine and Travel protocols for the country.

Achievements - POE

a. Effective Coordination, communication and collaboration amongst key stakeholders.
b. Implementation of enhanced entry and exit screening protocols.
c. Participation in the development and implementation of National and POE guidelines for quarantine and evacuation of Nigerian citizens from other countries.
d. Capacity building for both regular and surge staff
e. Reliance on existing ICAO/CAPSCA documents, IHR 2005 for Public Health response
f. Decontamination of conveyances, POE workplaces and environment
g. Regular Multi-layered Risk-based assessment at POE
h. Risk Communication to passengers upon resumption of flights
i. Effective Infection, Prevention and Control measures instituted at POE
j. Effective pax data management – Nigeria International travel Portal (NITP)
k. Stock piling of PPEs and hand hygiene materials for use at POE.
l. Establishment of Public Health Emergency Management Teams (PHEMTs) for each designated POE. Whatsapp groups created for each POE for effective and timely comm.

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LESSONS LEARNED

- High-level decision making is important/crucial in effective response to a Pandemic. The Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19 provided for effective and prompt policy formulation and decision making at the highest level of Government.
- An effective National Air Transportation Facilitation Committee was key to provide policy directives and decision making to POE stakeholders.
- The multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach proved efficient for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by key stakeholders at the POE.
- Public Health Emergency Contingency Plans (PHECPs) – provided very important guidelines to POE personnel in their response to the pandemic.
- Establishing Public Health Emergency Management Teams (PHEMTs) at POEs enabled easy dissemination of information and decision making at the POE.
- Collaborative efforts with international partners and organizations was also very important for funding, capacity building and technical support at the POE.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Effective communication amongst key stakeholders played a crucial role in the response.
- CAPSCA assistance visits/follow-up assistance visits were crucial in developing capacity and better levels of Coordination and Collaboration amongst POE stakeholders.
- Implementation of ICAO PHE-related SARPs, CART, CAPSCA and WHO IHR 2005 provided the regulatory framework and guidance to the CAA, PHA and Aviation Service providers to effectively plan and respond to a Pandemic or any Communicable disease.
- Collaborative efforts with international partners and organizations was also very important for funding and capacity building.

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Conclusion

- While there is room for improved synergy and collaboration among agencies at the POEs in Nigeria, the POE stakeholders managed the COVID-19 response fairly well.
- Amid globalization, there is the need to strengthen surveillance and health screening at POEs, as air travel remains the fastest and easiest means through which communicable disease(s) can be spread.

Recommendation/ Next Steps

- Continuous strengthening of surveillance systems and early warning mechanisms at POEs, when needed.
- Investment in healthcare infrastructure and capacity building at the POE.
- Robust public health education and awareness trainings at POEs.
- Regular evaluation, updating and testing of response PHECPs based on lessons learned.
- Investment in laboratory and testing capacities at high-traffic Airports.
- Incorporation of ICAO PHE-related SARPs by all contracting states into their National aviation regulations.
- CAPSCA Assistance visits/ follow-up assistance visits to be provided for countries in the Region yet to have one - to provide capacity building to stakeholders at the Airports. Training and designation of more Technical Advisors.