



## FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION

Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004

### Agenda Item 7: Other facilitation matters

#### INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

(Presented by the Secretariat)

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper presents a report of action taken by ICAO to identify approaches that the Organization might take in assisting to reduce the risk of the introductions of invasive alien species via international civil aviation.

##### 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In 1998, the 32nd ICAO Assembly session adopted Resolution A32-9, *Preventing the introduction of invasive alien species*. *Invasive alien species* (IAS) are species—a group of organisms such as plants, animals or fungi—that have been relocated outside their natural range and having become established in the new environment, threaten one or more species which are native to that habitat. The Assembly also requested the ICAO Council to study the matter further to enable the Organization to make a decision on the action it might take in assisting to reduce the risk of such introductions, to complement the work being done by other international organizations such as the United Nations Environmental Programme, through the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Global Invasive Species Programme.

2.2 In 2001, the 33rd Assembly took note of ICAO's preliminary investigation into the matter, which pointed to a shortage of documentation *vis-à-vis* a universal IAS problem in civil aviation that could be addressed by ICAO on a multilateral basis. The Assembly therefore requested the Council to conduct a survey on the pathway assessment of the transport of invasive alien species by air, answers to which would allow the Organization to determine whether international civil aviation was a significant and/or a high-risk pathway *vis-à-vis* IAS and whether a strategy for prevention of their introductions via international civil aviation should be developed.

### 3. ICAO IAS SURVEY

3.1 Forty-nine States responded to an ICAO survey on the transport of invasive alien species by air. Thirty-eight acknowledged the existence of an IAS problem in their countries, and provided examples of IAS invasions via aircraft. Examples of IAS included micro-organisms (in discarded aircraft food, through sick passengers and in cargo), insects (in packing material, passenger baggage, cargo, aircraft cabin, containers, cargo hold and on imported animals), plants and plant weeds (in passenger baggage and cargo), mammals (in the aircraft structure and containers) and reptiles (in passenger baggage, wheel wells and containers).

3.2 However, most examples given were “hitchhiking” alien species, including insects found in packing material and cargo or carried on imported animals, animal or human viruses, viruses found in discarded aircraft food and fungi found in plants or seeds. The few examples given of alien species unintentionally introduced via civil aircraft without the assistance of a “host” included mosquitoes and other insects carried in the aircraft cabin and the introduction of the grey squirrel into Europe (probably carried in the aircraft structure or a container), the white grub (beetle) transported in the cargo hold and the brown tree snake (carried in aircraft wheel wells or other parts of the aircraft). Potential unintentional introductions by air of aquatic plants (and any hitchhiking invasive organisms) entangled on float-equipped or amphibious aircraft were also mentioned.

3.3 The responses indicated that States have in place detailed border entry controls and/or management programmes aimed at preventing the introduction of potentially invasive alien species, including brochures handed out to passengers (both in-flight and on disembarkation), Internet sites, media advertisements, airport notices, quarantine declaration on arrival cards, information workshops and awareness campaigns in schools and villages. Physical interventions include the use of detector dogs, the disinsection and disinfection of aircraft, passenger, cargo and baggage searches, the use of shoe disinfectant mats, the use of light traps at airports and post office mail inspection.

3.4 There are currently no specific agreements directly related to IAS and international civil aviation. Nineteen States, however, provided details of their membership in international governmental organizations that directly address the prevention/management of the unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien species, and whose work might have a bearing on the transport of invasive alien species by air.

3.5 Finally, the responding States made recommendations as to what ICAO could do to assist its Contracting States to prevent the unintentional introduction of potentially invasive alien species into their territories via international civil aviation. These suggestions fall into the following broad categories:

- a) drafting relevant standards aimed at preventing the *exportation* of potentially invasive alien species (e.g. the use of lights at airports, documentation requirements, inspection of aircraft, ensuring the use of clean packing material for air cargo);
- b) establishing contacts, and working closely, with other international organizations concerned with this subject; and
- c) dissemination of pertinent information (e.g. to the public, air travellers, States) by way of workshops, guidance material, and other means.

3.6 In a paper to the 35th Session of the ICAO Assembly (scheduled for September 2004), the Council has recommended that Contracting States be requested to forward to ICAO the “best practices” from their various agencies (agriculture, horticulture, customs, quarantine, health) on the prevention of invasive alien species introductions by air, for publication by the Organization as guidance material. Also, appropriate ICAO bodies should consider drafting Standards and Recommended Practices, if appropriate, reflecting the most common procedures or practices of States, for adoption in the relevant Annex(es) to the Chicago Convention.

4. **ACTION BY THE DIVISION**

- 4.1 The Division is invited to note the report presented in this paper.

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