



ICAO-WHO publish joint statement on COVID-19

For immediate release

ICAO HQ Montréal, 6 March 2020 – The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) published a [joint statement](#) today providing updated advice regarding COVID-19 and civil aviation.

Signed by the Director General of the WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and by ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu, the statement also reaffirms their commitment as UN specialized agencies to foster greater international cooperation to contain the virus and to protect the health of travellers.

The statement noted the importance of States adhering to ICAO and WHO standards relating to the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases, and to follow the International Health Regulations (2005).

ICAO itself has been working closely with governments and industry partners such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Airports Council International (ACI), to provide guidance to aviation authorities, airlines and airports, and advice to individuals, on appropriate measures that will protect the health of travellers and reduce the risk of transmission.

ICAO issued [two electronic bulletins](#) and a [State letter](#), to urge Member States to adhere to the recommendations and guidance provided by the WHO, and to highlight ICAO's role in providing aviation-related information on COVID-19, and in serving as the key facilitator for States and organizations that are members of the ICAO Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation ([CAPSCA](#)) programme to implement effective collaboration and coordination with all stakeholders.

The ICAO State letter directly urged national governments to implement the relevant provisions of Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention), to formalize their membership in CAPSCA and augment its funding for communicable disease response preparedness, and to establish a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee.

Given the importance of considering detailed health and disease information alongside civil aviation policies and procedures surrounding COVID-19, both ICAO and the WHO have been working closely together in recent weeks in order to develop expert advice and ensure coordinated global action.

Their statement today stressed the importance of greater public-private cooperation and inter-agency dialogue, and accordingly has urged States and relevant organizations to join ICAO's Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA).

Government aviation and health officials were also reminded to enhance cross-sector collaboration at the national level and establish National Facilitation Committees as required by ICAO Standards.

The new joint statement comes amidst increased international cooperation in order to coordinate a more effective response to COVID-19, and was welcomed by aviation industry groups.

“Stopping the spread of the virus is the top priority,” underscored Mr. Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s Director General and Chief Executive Officer.

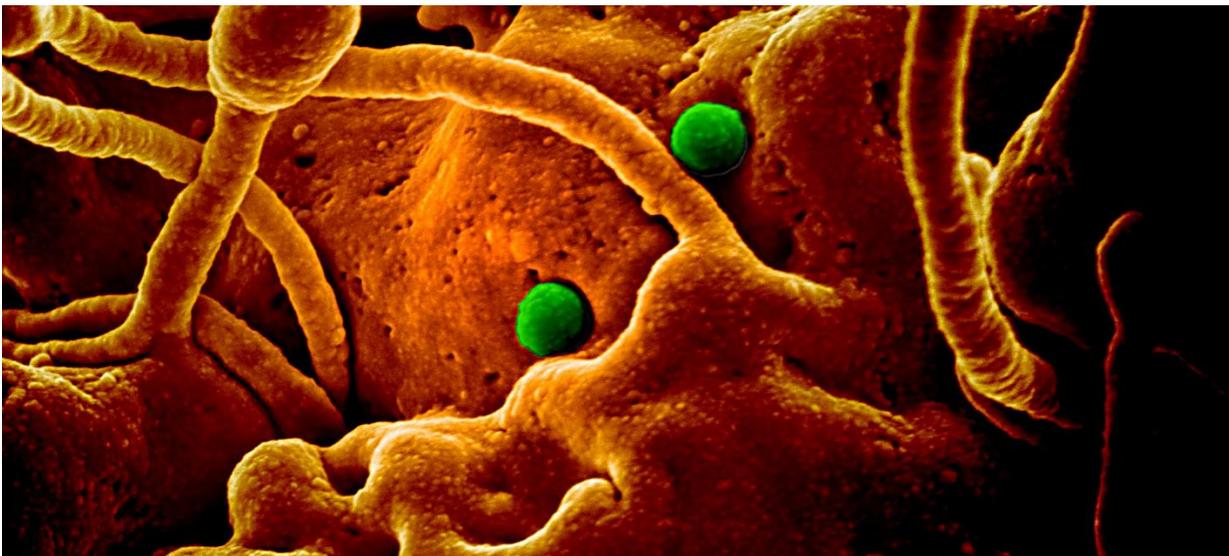
“IATA and the airlines are working closely with WHO, ICAO, and ACI to ensure that harmonized and updated procedures are made available in order to keep passengers safe, the world connected, and the virus contained. Travellers should be reassured that the industry is prepared to deal with communicable diseases as a result of experiences with previous outbreaks. The International Health Regulations of WHO are the established foundation for the coordinated global effort that will be required by all involved”

Ms. Angela Gittens, Director General of ACI similarly expressed appreciation towards the multi-sector and multi-agency communication reflected in the statement.

“The COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on aviation has highlighted the need for effective coordination and a proportionate response from States,” she highlighted. “ACI welcomes the leadership shown by ICAO and WHO in this regard and would urge States to follow WHO advice. The health and welfare of travellers, staff and the public, and limiting the spread of communicable diseases, are the priorities for the aviation industry, so it is in all of our interests to have a common, easily understood, approach to help to prevent the spread of illness. We also welcome the practical steps suggested by WHO that can assist travellers to protect themselves.”

The joint statement complements the ongoing efforts of ICAO and WHO in response to COVID-19.

ICAO has also published a new [web area](#) to serve as a single source for civil aviation-related information on COVID-19. Daily statistics on the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak and its impacts on aviation are also made available through the site.



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Resources for Editors

[WHO advice for travellers](#)

[ICAO COVID-19 Facilitation website](#)

[ICAO CAPSCA website](#)

[IATA Emergency Response Guidelines](#)

[ACI Health Priorities](#)

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States, and helps them to share their skies to their mutual benefit.

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