



**SUMMARY REPORT OF  
THE FIRST WACAF DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF CIVIL  
AVIATION VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19**

*(Video Teleconference, 9 April 2020)*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Following COVID-19 outbreak and the declaration by World Health Organization (WHO) of the event as Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), and pandemic, on xxx, ICAO has issued State letters to guide States in addressing COVID-19 Contingency Measures developed a global strategy dedicated to support States actions to overcome the ensuing crisis and return to normal operations.
- 1.2. As part of ICAO's mandate, the WACAF Regional Office, in coordination with AFCAC convened on 9 April 2020 the First Virtual Emergency meeting of Directors-General of Civil Aviation from States within its area of accreditation, to make sure that the Directors-General of Civil Aviation are all aware about this work, follow up on recent ICAO State letters, assess with the situation prevailing in your respective States and discuss any other issues of common interest related to COVID-19 environment.

### **Attendance**

- 1.3. The meeting was attended by 85 participants from States, International and Regional Organizations, and Industry Aircraft Operators, Airport Operators, Air Navigation Service Providers, Aircraft Manufacturers. The list of participants is provided as **Appendix** to this report.

### **Officers and Secretariat**

- 1.4. Mr. Prosper Zo'o Minto'o, Regional Director for ICAO Western and Central African Office (WACAF) acted as Moderator and Secretary of the meeting. He was assisted by Mr. Barry Kashambo, Regional Director for ICAO Eastern and Southern African Office (ESAF), and supported by Regional Officers from both Regional Offices.
- 1.5. In his introductory remarks, the ICAO Regional Director WACAF commended the high turnout of WACAF DG CAAs, RSOOs and the industry partners. He highlighted the main objectives of the meeting to discuss and agree on a common and harmonized approach to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aviation in the WACAF Region, ensure safe continuity of business establish an appropriate strategy for COVID-post-recovery.
- 1.6. Mr. Barry Kashambo, Regional Director ESAF and Mr. Tefera Makonnen Tefera, Secretary General of AFCAC also addressed the meeting and encouraged participants to actively participate in the deliberations. They respectively gave information on actions taken by the ICAO ESAF Regional Office in the conduct of a similar E-Conference/meeting on 8 April 2020 and the on-going initiative of AFCAC to engage the African Union Commission (AUC) to address issues related to the pandemic and beyond. In this regard, the COVID-19 crisis could serve as a catalyst towards gradual materialization of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), supported by the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

### **Agenda**

- 1.7. The following agenda was adopted by the meeting:
  - a) Introduction
  - b) Restrictions promulgated by States
  - c) Economic Impact of COVID-19

- d) ICAO Activities - Safety & Air Navigation Operational Measures / CAPSCA implementation
- e) State briefings on COVID-19 & Stakeholders' Perspective & Challenges
- f) Strategy for recovery
- g) Way forward

## **2. Restrictions promulgated by States**

- 2.1. The meeting reviewed the restrictions affecting aviation promulgated by States as part of the contingency to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the related aeronautical information (NOTAMs).
- 2.2. In this regard, the Secretariat recalled ICAO State Letter referenced AN 13/35-20/47, requesting States to review their initial NOTAMs on the promulgated restrictions and consider exceptions and arrangements for operations related to humanitarian aid, medical and relief flights, overflights, cargo flights, alternate aerodromes identified in the flight plans, technical landings where passengers do not disembark; quarantine of flights-crew members during stops.
- 2.3. It was noted that the Regional Office successfully provided assistance to States to ensure clarity and accuracy of the published aeronautical information, using a template developed by ICAO.

## **3. Economic Impact of COVID-19 on aviation**

- 3.1. The meeting recognized the challenging time for the aviation sector due to the COVID-19 environment. While aviation is at the frontline for coordinated response to mitigate the loss of lives through the delivery of essential medical and vital air cargo services supporting the global supply chains needed to respond to the crisis, its involvement in the humanitarian operations and the repatriation of people to their respective place of residence, the current reality indicates that the aviation is among the sectors severely affected as a result of Covid-19 on the global economy.
- 3.2. The meeting acknowledged that the COVID-19 environment is devastating to the aviation sector globally and regionally, characterized by: a) traffic decline due to flight cancellations, aircraft groundings, travel bans and border closures; b) traffic decline with fewer flights, lower load factors and impact on yield; and c) considerable loss of revenue proportionate to traffic loss and decline in unit revenues (extra-aeronautical).
- 3.3. It was noted that the postponement of the Fifty-third session of the Economic Commission for Africa and Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development initially scheduled from 18 to 24 March 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AFCAC and ICAO Regional Offices will follow up and explore with ECA the possibility to include the Aviation Sector on the agenda at the next opportunity.

## **4. ICAO Activities - Safety & Air Navigation Operational Measures**

### **ICAO Activities**

- 4.1. The meeting was briefed on the initiatives taken by ICAO in coordination with the UN systems institutions, States and industry partners for the management of the crisis were provided to the meeting. These initiatives included, but are not limited to the following:

- a) Safety of staff (staff working from home – ref. UN Guidelines)
  - b) Emergency advice to States and International Organizations;
  - c) Standardization of States responses to aviation aspects of COVID-19;
  - d) Coordination between ICAO Headquarters and Regional Offices; and
  - e) Interaction with States through Regional Offices where necessary.
- 4.2. Detailed information was provided on ICAO activities related to the areas of Aviation Medicine (in collaboration with WHO), Air Transport and Air Navigation to facilitate and maintain safe operations of humanitarian supply chain, repatriation and medical evacuation flights and provide medical expertise.
- 4.3. Specific activities were highlighted such as the issuance of electronic bulletins, development of communications support such as Airport restrictions, planning traveler applications, support and participation in industry meetings and electronic requests, training courses through conduct of Technical Assistance visits to States, Industry and public training courses and update of the CAPSCA Website.

#### **Safety and Air Navigation Operational Measures**

- 4.4. The meeting was briefed on ICAO consultations carried out with more than 300 States' subject matter experts through 40 teleconferences, covering flight operations (FLTOPSP), medical certificates (MPSG), cabin crew (ICSG), personnel licensing (PLT-EM and EPLTF), airworthiness (AIRP), Chicago Convention framework (Legal Committee), air traffic services (ATMOPS), dangerous goods (DGP) and RSOO cooperative platform (RSOO-CP).
- 4.5. Following these consultations, ICAO issued State Letter AN 11/55-20/50 dated 3<sup>th</sup> April 2020 outlining States obligations under Articles **38, 39 and 40** of the Chicago Convention and the means to facilitate meeting those obligations and appealing for flexibility in State approaches.
- 4.6. The meeting took cognizance of the launch of the COVID-19 Contingency Related Differences (CCRD) public website (<https://www.icao.int/safety/COVID-19OPS>) that will include temporary differences caused by COVID-19, indication of States on what COVID-19 related differences would recognize, guidance developed by the Secretariat and State nominated SMEs, risk analysis (link to SMI site) and any additional information States can submit. Nine eligible Standards in Annex 1 (2) and Annex 6 (7) to the Chicago Convention were identified.
- 4.7. Further details were provided on the actions conducted by ICAO to ensure States business continuity while conducting Safety Management activities aimed at addressing and mitigating safety risks related to COVID-19 in Airspace, Aerodrome Operations, Personnel Licensing, Aviation Medicine, Aircraft Operations, Airworthiness of aircraft, Cargo and Dangerous Goods, Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigations.

#### **CAPSCA implementation**

- 4.8. The meeting was informed on ICAO activities related to CAPSCA, including regular COVID-19 updates, coordination with CAPSCA partners, other UN agencies and industry, website updates (<http://www.capsca.org/CoronaVirusRefs.html>), support CAPSCA meetings, public and industry training courses, and planned TCB collaboration.

4.9. The Regional Office participated in an urgent CAPSCA Africa virtual meeting which was held on 19 March 2010, aiming at providing States with appropriate advice and guidance on the implementation of the ICAO and WHO provisions, for the management of the COVID-19, under the coordination of the ICAO Eastern and Southern African (ESAF) Regional Office; and the outcomes of this meeting including recommendations and guidance to States and key stakeholders, were forwarded to States WACAF States, all of which are already members of CAPSCA programme.

## **5. State Briefings and Stakeholders Perspective and challenges**

### ***State Briefings***

5.1. The meeting noted the information provided on the situation prevailing in WACAF States due to COVID-19, actions taken in the industry with regards to the spread of COVID-19, activities undertaken to ensure business continuity, exemptions and other conditions in the current status of operations (PEL, OPS, AIR, AIG, ANS and AGA), and the challenges being encountered.

5.2. States unanimously commended the initiative taken by the ICAO Regional Office and AFCAC to convene the virtual meeting and suggested that such meetings be held periodically. They provided details on the national situation and measures currently in place. It was noted in general, that the COVID-19 crisis is managed under the State of Emergency regime in most cases and Contingency Measures promulgated at the highest level, and encompasses restrictions in mobility imposed by curfews.

5.3. The meeting identified the following common practices in States:

- a) Establishment of national multidisciplinary COVID-19 Management Committees;
- b) Issuance of Order of stay-at-home or limited essential working staff to handle CAA's regulatory and oversight activities;
- c) NOTAMs revised when necessary to incorporate guidance from ICAO on exemptions in order to facilitate the operation of flights related to Cargo, Dangerous Goods, Humanitarian, Sanitary, Evacuation, Repatriation of nationals, etc.;
- d) Cancellation of oversight flights except those subject to NOTAMs in the specific areas listed above;
- e) Regulatory measures in compliance with the obligations recalled in ICAO States Letters;
- f) Revision of CAAs strategies and work programmes.

5.4. The meeting identified the following common challenges facing States:

- a) Maintenance of States' Aviation Safety and Security oversight capacities since full oversight functions cannot currently be conducted;
- b) Maintenance/renewal of the validity of Certificates, Licences, Approvals/Authorizations that can be achieved with reporting to the COVID-19 Contingency Related Difference (CCRD) accessible through the OLF dashboard ([www.icao.int/usoap](http://www.icao.int/usoap));
- c) Need for guidance on management of flights carrying cargo in the passenger cabin;
- d) Provision of assistance to people under stress, including passengers and operators staff members;
- e) Transportation /Repatriation of human remains;

- f) Coordination between National Civil Aviation Authorities and Health Administrations;
- g) Decline /loss of income, calling for identification of alternate sources of revenue (such as RPAS operations);
- h) Training of aviation personnel.

### **Stakeholders Perspective and challenges**

5.5. Aviation industry stakeholders also briefed the meeting and provided their perspective as follows:

#### ***Air Operators***

- 5.6. IATA Special Envoy, Aeropolitical Affairs commended DGs of CAAs for their continued support on the ground during this crisis and confirmed his confidence to the success of common actions to overcome the impact of COVID-19. He also requested to be in liaison with States' focal points for clarification of NOTAMs, some of which, have been sources of confusion. He made the proposal for the establishment of national groups of stakeholders (composed of ANSPs, Airlines, Aerodrome Operators, Ground Handling Operators, etc.) to start the preparation under the leadership of CAAs for resumption of normal operation. Furthermore, the Representative of IATA suggested that the aviation industry should take advantages of this period of low activities to address facilities repair and maintenance activities. Lastly, he expressed his interest to receive information on extension of Licences, Certificates Approvals in a database as more partnerships are being concluded as well as NOTAMs and any major information to be discussed with the industry.
- 5.7. AFRAA Secretary General reported on difficulties encountered in understanding NOTAMs and recalled the importance for the industry for which they are intended. He informed the meeting on its project to design and establish a cost effective Cargo system for the delivery of medical materials to States and for this project, the needs from States are strongly awaited. He also observed that currently for a charter flight, a full cargo aircraft leasing price was proposed at USD 1 million. Furthermore, the current COVID-19 derived demands are being carried by foreign flights and the Secretary General suggested that African carriers be considered by African States. In addition, the Representative of AFRAA informed the meeting that his organization is exploring the possibility for a Webinar of Ministers of Finance and Transport for a High Level coordination and the convening of a meeting on funding of the Air Transport sector. At the end he recalled that since 18 March 2020, opportunity to assist airlines was sent to States and that further discussions will be conducted during the week of 13-17 April 2020 for the preparation of recovery.

#### ***Air Navigation Service Providers***

- 5.8. ASECNA Director, Air Navigation Operations informed the meeting on the development of guidance material for the management of activities during COVID-19, in coordination with CANSO, the conduct of an online training for its Air Traffic Controllers in order to maintain their competency despite the reduced level of activity. Aeronautical information was published in accordance with CAAs' directives. Regular exchanges with IATA are maintained with a forthcoming meeting on 15 April 2020. Repatriation of all trainees from the ASECNA training schools in Dakar, Douala and Niamey to their duty stations or countries is almost completed and extension of validity of ATC licence was being coordinated with its member States' CAAs.
- 5.9. CANSO Africa Director reported to have identified its members' needs for assistance on the management of the challenges resulting from COVID-19 outbreak and the liaison with IATA to

identify its members' requirements. CANSO organized a Webinar with 200 participants to address impact analysis on personnel training, fatigue and protection, service recovery and discussed with AERON in terms of movements during this period.

### ***Airport Operators***

- 5.10. ACI Africa Secretary General indicated the environment created by COVID-19 will increase travellers distrust in air transport. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges will be to restore the public confidence, through appropriate measures demonstrating that aviation remains one of the safest means of transport. All the aviation stakeholders should work together, as quick as possible, to develop appropriate strategies for this purpose.

### ***Aircraft Manufacturers***

- 5.11. 5.11 AIRBUS Regional Safety Director, Africa informed the meeting of guidance material developed for Airbus operators to address airworthiness aspects for a proper transportation of cargo in the passenger cabin. This guidance material shared with operators can be used by ICAO and States CAAs for information. The development of coordination platforms by areas of operation/specialty such as Safety, AGA and ANS, together with the establishment of a periodic safety review platforms was recommended.
- 5.12. BOEING Director for Government Affairs and Market Development, Sub-Sahara Africa informed the meeting on available guidelines on decision making process developed by Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) for Operators in addition to guidance developed by Boeing for operators on passenger airplane carriage of cargo and confirmed his availability to answer any safety related questions. He also drew the attention of the meeting on the maintenance of grounded aircraft and underlined that on-going actions were being conducted with airlines for a proper sharing of available technical guidance.

### ***Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs)/Regional Accident Investigation Organization (RAIO)***

- 5.13. AAMAC Executive Secretary provided the meeting with information on its Business Continuity Plan and suggested that the need for continuity of operation with emphasis on emerging safety issues be considered for the recovery under coordination by ICAO. Furthermore, AAMAC enquired whether the temporary differences to ICAO SARPs due to alleviations to be posted to the COVID-19 Contingency-Related Differences (CCRD) sub-system of EFOD include Air Navigation Services related provisions such as flight check of navigational aids or flight validation to ensure safety of flight operations after recovery.
- 5.14. BAGASOO Representative informed the meeting that it is conducting online training sessions for its member States on aircraft storage and carriage of cargo in the cabin.
- 5.15. BAGAIA Commissioner informed the meeting that, despite the current low level of aviation activities, aircraft accident investigators should be on the alert at all times, bearing in mind that there are still cargo flight operations on-going.
- 5.16. URSAC General Coordinator informed the meeting on challenges encountered to implement its work programme resulting from the complete containment of the personnel working from home. A Committee on COVID-19 monitoring and response strategy was established by the UEMOA Commission based on a working paper prepared by URSAC. He also indicated that an



assistance initiative to member States was on going. Finally, he informed the meeting that a High Level Meeting of UEMOA Heads of State was in preparation.

## **6. Strategy for recovery**

- 6.1. The meeting agreed on the need to establishment of a Task Force to steer the development of a comprehensive post-COVID-19 Recovery Strategy that will innovatively identify opportunities for Africa aviation industry towards a stable and sustainable aviation industry recovery;
- 6.2. It was also agreed to establish a cooperative and collaborative network by all stakeholders to seek the required assistance at international, regional and national levels in order to support the Recovery Plan aimed to ensure the gradual recovery of the aviation industry in Africa.

## **7. Way forward and Recommendations**

- 7.1. The meeting agreed in principle on the following recommendations and conclusions as the way forward:
  - a) *The ICAO Regional Office should assist States in implementing the global strategy and the safety and air navigation operational measures developed by ICAO to support their actions to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and return to normal and safe operation of air transport. In doing so, a safety risk management approach should be adopted to support alleviations to ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.*
  - b) *ICAO should continue to facilitate training of aviation personnel;*
  - c) *In the COVID-19 environment, States should facilitate humanitarian, medical and repatriation services operations and allow the performance of technical and maintenance activities as required. Proper coordination should be established between States' CAAs, Health Administrations and other relevant authorities involved in the management of COVID-19 crisis;*
  - d) *There is a need for cooperation, collaboration and networking to seek assistance from the African Union Commission (AUC), international and regional organizations/institutions and national frameworks/mechanisms, through allocation of adequate resources to support the aviation sector.*
  - e) *There is a need to establish a Task Force under the coordination of AFCAC, tasked with the development of a comprehensive, consolidated response strategy taking into account the respective mandates and interests of all stakeholders in the African civil aviation industry, and advocacy to secure the necessary political commitment and mobilization of the resources required for the implementation of the proposed recovery strategies.*
  - f) *States should consider remote working and embrace enabling technologies to support efficient and cost-effective provision of services in all areas. New types of activities which are contactless need to be defined, such as webinars, online training or applications/tools;*
  - g) *States and Stakeholders should establish a secured stakeholders' platform embracing all the areas to reinforce the networking;*
  - h) *States and Stakeholders should establish and promote a Trust Framework for regaining the confidence of the international community and travelling public in air transport; this should include ensuring availability of reliable data to maintain and boost confidence;*
  - i) *AFCAC and ICAO Regional Offices will follow up and explore with ECA the possibility to include the Aviation Sector on the agenda of the Fifty-third session of the Economic Commission for Africa and Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development;*

- j) *The ICAO Regional Office should continue to convene DGCA meetings with the participation of aviation stakeholders and industry, as an important forum for consultations, exchange of information and best practices, coordination of efforts, and alignment of regional programmes.*

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**First ICAO - WACAF DG CAAs Virtual-Meeting 9 April 2020**

**List of Attendance**

**Première Réunion Virtuelle OACI-DG ACS WACAF 9 Avril 2020**

**Liste des Participants**

<b>STATES/ ETATS</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES</b>
Benin Burkina Faso Cameroon Cape Verde Congo Côte d'Ivoire Equatorial Guinea Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Sierra Leone Togo	AFRAA ASECNA AAMAC AFCAC CANSO ACI-AFRICA AU AIRBUS BOEING ASSA-AC BAGASOO BAGAIA IATA URSAC WFP
ICAO	RO ESAF
	RO WACAF