INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

AFI COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR AVIATION SECURITY AND FACILITATION IN AFRICA (AFI SECFAL PLAN)

11TH AFI SECFAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

AIR TRANSPORT FACILITATION RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

(*Presented by the AFI SECFAL Plan Secretariat*)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The ICAO Facilitation Programme builds on Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as maintained in Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, designed to help States achieve maximum efficiency in their border clearance operations. This working paper presents recent developments in the ICAO Facilitation Programme, notably developments pertaining to Amendment 29 to Annex 9 — *Facilitation,* the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) and the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy. The paper also highlights the outcomes of the Facilitation Stream of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC-2021), held from 12 to 22 October 2021, and the first ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families, held from 1 to 3 December 2021.   Action by the Meeting is proposed under **Paragraph 3.**

Strategic Objectives	*Aviation Security and Facilitation*

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Annex 9 — *Facilitation* is based on 10 articles of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (Chicago Convention), which require Member States to comply with laws governing the inspection of aircraft, cargo and passengers by authorities concerned with customs, immigration, agriculture and public health to minimize operational delays. To carry out this mandate, the ICAO Facilitation Programme builds on Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as maintained in Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, designed to help States achieve maximum efficiency in their border clearance operations.

1.2   This paper contains recent developments in ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), and the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (ICAO TRIP) Strategy. The paper also highlights the outcomes of the Facilitation Stream of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC-2021), held from 12 to 22 October 2021 and the first ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families, held from 1 to 3 December 2021.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   The Twelfth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/12), held from 13 to 22 July 2021, considered proposals for new and revised health-related Standards and Recommended Practices for inclusion in Amendment 29 to Annex 9, developed by the ICAO's ad hoc Task Force on health Issues Outbreaks in Aviation. Documents pertaining to FALP/12 can be found on the ICAO Public website at (https://www.icao.int/Meetings/FALP/Pages/FALP12-2021.aspx).

2.2   The FALP/12 established a dedicated Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9), approved by the Air Transport Committee (ATC) in September 2021. The working group comprises experts from the Member States, relevant international organizations and industry, supported by the ICAO Secretariat. The mandate of the WGA9 is, inter alia, to ensure that the measures contained in Annex 9 are commensurate with the current and foreseeable global aviation facilitation environment for civil aviation.

2.3   The Facilitation Panel's Working Group on Human Trafficking developed a Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Aviation Sector to equip States, civil aviation authorities and organizations, aircraft operators, and airports with guidance and recommendations to inform their development of comprehensive counter-trafficking strategies in line with ICAO Assembly Resolution A40-16, *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*. In September 2021, the ATC approved FALP/12's recommendation of the Comprehensive Strategy.

2.4   On 9 March 2022, the ICAO Council adopted Amendment 29 to Annex 9, which will become effective on 18 July 2022 and applicable on 18 November 2022. This amendment includes new and/or revised provisions on public health emergencies, security of travel and health proofs documents, relief and repatriation flights, air transport facilitation of persons with disabilities, assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, and trafficking in persons.

2.5   To assist Member States in implementing Annex 9 health-related provisions, notably to improve coordination between public health and aviation authorities and other Facilitation stakeholders in responding to the pandemic, ICAO developed a Facilitation Implementation Package (iPack) on Strengthening National Air Transport Facilitation Committees for the Restart and the Resilience of Civil Aviation. This aims to assist Member States in establishing and operating a resilient and robust National Facilitation Committee that provides the necessary framework for effective coordination and collaboration. Additionally, ICAO developed 3 training courses entitled Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy, and Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families, for delivery in both virtual and classroom formats. The Annex 9 Course has been deployed in 43 States in Africa, while the iPack on Strengthening National Air Transport Facilitation Committees for the Restart and the Resilience of Civil Aviation has been deployed in 7 States in Africa with very successful outcomes.

2.6   From 12 to 22 October 2021, ICAO convened the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021). The Conference discussed five agenda items under the Facilitation Stream, covering a wide range of subjects that resulted in 79 recommendations endorsed by the Ministerial Plenary. Of the 79 recommendations, 17 are addressed to ICAO. Documentation pertaining to HLCC 2021, including the

Ministerial Declaration of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 and the report can be found at https://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLCC2021/Pages/yellow-cover-report.aspx).

2.7　　　　　From 1 to 3 December 2021, ICAO convened the first Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families (AAAVF 2021). As adopted in Amendment 29 to Annex 9, a new Recommended Practice (RP) is addressed to aircraft and airport operators on developing plans to provide timely assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families. Notably, RP 8.46 was elevated from a Recommended Practice to a Standard enhancing the Annex 9 regulatory framework on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their families.

2.8　　　　　The ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) is an integral component of international infrastructure supporting the use of electronic Machine Readable Travel Documents (eMRTDs). Providing a central point for trusted dissemination facilitates the public key sharing that eMRTD issuers must undertake while also improving document authentication capabilities amongst those receiving eMRTDs, enhancing aviation security and facilitation.

2.9　　　　　The ICAO PKD services have expanded with new data types being made available and the use of the PKD in support of authenticating health proofs for travel being considered. Possible future use by private sector entities is also being explored. These developments bring value to more Member States, with the participation in the PKD increasing year on year. As participation has grown, annual fees payable have decreased. In 2021, 7 Member States, Ghana, Lesotho, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Sudan and Viet Nam, joined the ICAO PKD, bringing the total number of PKD participants to 82.

2.10　　　　The first ICAO PKD Master List was issued in March 2020 through the ICAO PKD. This list makes available the root of trust ("CSCA") public key certificates of eMRTD issuing States, which provides a trustworthy source of the essential public keys needed for eMRTD authentication (State letter EC 6/8.3-20/68 refers). Furthermore, it is signed under the United Nations Laissez-Passer ePassport root of trust, allowing recipients to validate its authenticity and integrity.

2.11　　　　The ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy establishes a comprehensive framework for Member States to build a robust traveller identification process. It is composed of five elements related to identification management, namely: Evidence of Identity (EoI); Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs); Document Issuance and Control (DIC); Inspection Systems and Tools (IST), including the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD); and Interoperable Applications (IA), such as Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data.

2.12　　　　The COVID-19 pandemic has had enormous negative impacts on global aviation. The ICAO TRIP Strategy has been recognized as a key component in maintaining business continuity through the crisis and stimulating the restart of aviation as well as an effective and sustainable recovery post-COVID. In response, ICAO, in collaboration with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), actively contributed to developing a global framework to support States and industry to cope with the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in the immediate, near and longer terms.

2.13　　　　The development of ICAO specifications for travel-related health proofs – the ICAO Visible Digital Seal for non-constrained environments (VDS-NC) – leveraged existing trust models and verification systems established globally for ePassports, but applied for the COVID-19 health certificate use case. The VDS-NC specification is designed to provide a globally-interoperable framework for validating vaccination, testing and recovery certificates. Using the VDS-NC was considered the most suitable way to present reliable and secure COVID-19 health proofs at border crossings.

2.14　　　　　To assist Member States in implementing the ICAO TRIP Strategy and Annex 9 – *Facilitation*, ICAO developed a dedicated training course entitled ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy course. The aim is to, inter alia, enable staff from Civil Aviation Authorities and all relevant border stakeholders to deal collectively with the provisions of Annex 9 and support the implementation of the 5 elements of the ICAO TRIP Strategy. The course builds upon the base of documents and guidance material pertaining to the ICAO TRIP Strategy already available on the ICAO public website https://www.icao.int/Security/FAL/TRIP/Pages/Publications.aspx. In addition, as part of the support provided to States, the 8th edition of Doc 9303, Machine Readable Travel Documents, composed of 13 parts, was published on the ICAO public site (https://www.icao.int/publications/pages/publication.aspx?docnum=9303) in all ICAO languages in 2021.

2.15　　　　　In terms of innovative developments, the ICAO Technical Advisory Group on the Traveller Identification Programme (TAG/TRIP) endorsed, inter alia, the ICAO Guiding Core Principles for the Development of Digital Travel Credentials (DTC), as well as the technical specifications of VDS for Non-Constrained environments (VDS-NC). The DTC specifications will enable an ICAO-compliant passport to be extended to a passenger's mobile device, allowing a more seamless traveller journey with less passenger touchpoints at the airports, resulting in a healthier and safer travel experience. In addition, the development of guidance material on how States might create and use vaccine certificates for the travel context using the VDS-NC specifications is in progress, and a dedicated VDS-NC Implementation Package (iPack) is being developed. The objectives and proposed contents of the VDS-NC iPack are to support the implementation of the specifications of the VDS-NC for both issuance and inspection either under the existing eMRTD Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) or under any newly-established health PKI as decided by States.

3.　　ACTION BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE

3.1　　　　　The Steering Committee is invited to:

   a) note the information in the paper;
   b) encourage States to implement the provisions of Annex 9 – *Facilitation*;
   c) encourage States to consider deployment of the iPacks, and participate in the Facilitation-related training courses;
   d) encourage States to join the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD); and
   e) encourage States to consider implementing the recommendations of the Facilitation Stream of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19.

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