

## ICAO Input to the Thematic Review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of 2021

### Background:

Pre COVID-19, international civil aviation allowed for more than 100,000 daily flights transporting 12 million passengers and around USD 18 billion worth of goods. These operations translated into roughly 4.5 billion passenger movements per year, supporting 65.5 million jobs and 2.7 trillion dollars in world gross domestic product (GDP). When flight restrictions were first imposed in April 2020, international air travel collapsed almost entirely. Only two per cent of normal traffic remained, disconnecting families and businesses all over the world. Ever since the sector has witnessed its biggest challenge of all times.

However, sustainable aviation and transportation are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Through its normative work, oversight and technical assistance and cooperation, ICAO serves the people of the world in facilitating international civil air transport that is safe, secure, efficient, economically viable and environmentally responsible. While there is no stand-alone SDG on sustainable transport, the sector is mainstreamed into many of the SDGs and tremendously contributes to all the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social development and green goals.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, and aiming to provide States with harmonized guidance on how to best help unify and align the numerous health and safety response and recovery approaches being implemented around the world, the ICAO Council established the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART). Supported by the ICAO Secretariat, representatives from States, UN Organizations, international and regional organizations and aviation industry partners identified and recommended strategic priorities and policies to support States and aviation industry for a safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the aviation sector. The Council of ICAO subsequently adopted the CART Report that aims at providing practical, aligned guidance to governments and industry operators in order to restart the international air transport sector and recover from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis. The “Take-off” Guidance Document that provides a framework for addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global aviation transportation system and includes a section on Public Health Risk Mitigation Measures was adopted in June 2020.

ICAO Headquarters and its Regional Offices have been actively involved in various activities to support States under their accreditation at regional and national levels, in collaboration with relevant international and regional organizations. Other activities undertaken covered aspects, including but not limited to: regular communication and coordination with States and all concerned stakeholders through virtual meetings (including Director General of Civil Aviation - DGCA meetings); webinars and regional coordination groups; facilitation to the CAPSCA programme implementation, in close cooperation with WHO; identifying and addressing States needs and operational challenges, supporting urgent needs for the global supply chain; humanitarian flights and repatriation flights in line with UN regional coordination mechanisms; coordinating exchange of information and experience between States, representing ICAO, as required, and, supporting the planning for the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the restart of aviation operations.

Furthermore, CART Report and Take Off guidelines are being operationalised through a Global Implementation Roadmap, which includes development of the COVID-19 “Implementation Package” (iPack). The iPacks aim at providing support to the ICAO Member States by addressing their various needs to cope with the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in regard to the movement of goods and health of passengers. This includes aspects related to public health-related measures, facilitation and

aviation security, aviation safety (e.g. management of temporary regulatory alleviations), risk management, as well as air transport and economics. ICAO and its Regional Offices are supporting and following their deployment to ensure alignment with the guidance issued at regional or national level.

The ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force reconvened in early 2021 to review and update its guidance for States to counter the headwinds and accelerate the momentum for aviation restart and recovery. As a “living document”, the CART guidance can only be of a transient nature. Following the emergence of virus variants, progress in vaccine rollouts and new tools for combating COVID-19, the work of CART has targeted specific issues related to testing and vaccination of passengers as part of a State’s multilayer risk management strategy. A new High-Level Cover Document of the Phase III of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force, with a Third Edition of the “Take-off” Guidance Document, introducing additional recommendations and guidance in light of the latest developments of the COVID-19 crisis were adopted. The guidance on Public Health Corridors (PHCs) and appropriate masks for air travel was also updated. ICAO through its Regional Offices has intensified its support, coordination and harmonization efforts involving not only the aviation authorities and the industry, but also regional and national public health authorities.

Below is a brief overview of some of the actions and measures taken by ICAO as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic which help put the world back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, within the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

### **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere:**

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, ICAO has been working on developing a strategic planning document for a possible Global Air Transport Plan (GATP) with the objective to provide a long-term vision and aspirational goals in harmonizing the air transport framework in all Member States and to set the strategy to foster the development of a sound and economically-viable civil aviation system globally through targeted economic policies and supporting activities. The results of these endeavours are intended to contribute to the growth of civil aviation activities and the efficiency of air transport; hence, to the global economy and the expansion of trade and tourism. These activities promote that all men and women have access to economic resources, transportation services and new technologies.

With the onset of the pandemic, these works have been overshadowed by other more prominent and immediate issues, while still acknowledging the important nature of continuing the development towards a possible GATP. The ICAO Air Transport Regulatory Panel has met in 2020 for an informal meeting and is set to reconvene towards the end of 2021 with a clearer and more defined agenda.

In a general manner, ICAO promotes the importance of connectivity and air liberalization, through partnerships with other UN agencies (e.g. UNWTO), regional and global meetings and subsequent declarations (most recently the 2018 Guyana Declaration on Sustainable Air Transport Development), as drivers for better access to transportation of passengers and goods, such as humanitarian aid. These activities contribute to SDG 1 by ensuring significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and contributing to the provision of adequate and predictable means to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its forms, in particular LDCs.

Such coordination and partnerships have been amplified throughout the COVID-19 crisis with the establishment of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) and its substantial collaboration efforts with UN agencies, in particular the World Health Organization (WHO), and other partner organizations.

### **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture:**

There is a correlation between transport and food security. Logistic chains impact on agricultural productivity and market accessibility. When it comes to SDG 2, aviation has a role to play in ensuring market accessibility for sustainable food production systems, strengthening capacity for adaptation to climate change, and enhancing the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives. The fast connectivity provided by aviation facilitates transport of perishable agricultural products every day. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and artificial intelligence can also bring change in the way we do business to support SDG 2 as they are being used to improve food quality during crop production or to collect soil samples, which will support precision agriculture.

The disruptions of the functioning of food systems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted again the vital importance of food security and nutrition of people around the world. Food security in times of the crises depends to a great extent on reliable transport of relief staff and supplies. In this regard, ICAO has been working towards a closer collaboration and procedural alignment among air transport stakeholders to ensure timely delivery of emergency and humanitarian aid, PPE and medical supplies and goods and food supplies.

As COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, ICAO has taken action to assist the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), managed by the World Food Programme (WFP), in their efforts to deliver reliable and effective passenger and light cargo transport during the COVID-19 pandemic in support of wide-ranging humanitarian goals. To this end, the ICAO Regional Offices provided assistance to WFP, facilitating their aviation operations within their respective regions in the COVID-19 pandemic context.

### **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages:**

The most recent outbreaks in communicable diseases (Ebola in 2018 and COVID-19 in 2019) have demonstrated the pivotal role of aviation in the effort to mitigate their spread, as well as the subsequent impact on the global public health and economy e.g. travel restrictions causing disruptions on the global trade, food and medical supply chain and tourism. This can only be achieved by adopting a multi-sectoral, multi-organizational approach.

The inadequate preparedness and the need for a coordinated global cross-sectoral response were identified as the biggest challenges of the international community regarding the management of a public health event in aviation. In this vein, the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) a voluntary cross-sectorial, multi-organizational collaboration programme, managed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), has been instrumental in addressing the aforementioned challenges by ensuring collaboration between the aviation and public health sectors; facilitating safe and economically viable air transport while contributing to public health protection.

In addition, in view of the Recommendation 14 of Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) High-Level Cover Document, and the guidance contained in the updated Take-Off Guidance Document (TOGD), ICAO has been strongly encouraging States to implement Public Health Corridors (PHCs).

A PHC is formed when two or more States agree to mutually recognize the implemented public health mitigation measures on one or more routes between their States. To enable such mutual recognition, States are strongly encouraged to actively collaborate and share information with other States and enter into bilateral or multilateral discussions with each other to implement PHCs in a harmonized manner and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. To support States with the implementation of PHCs, ICAO developed the Implementation Package (iPack) Establishing a PHC. The iPack includes associated procedures and relevant tools that will be regularly updated in view of the latest scientific developments.

In addition, a new publication, *Manual on Testing and Cross-Border Risk Management Measures*, has been submitted to CART for consideration. It provides States with guidance on a risk-based multi-layer

mitigation approach that might be applied in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 between travellers and States while at the same time allowing for a re-opening of borders and economies. It includes a description of risk management measures, a risk management decision making tool, a review of possible testing protocols; and a series of examples to help States in their decision making process.

Lastly, ICAO Regional Offices played a major role in coordinating and collaborating with States and all stakeholders, including WHO, for the implementation of the CART recommendations and measures, in particular the health related guidelines; and provided necessary assistance to States in the implementation of the public health measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by air transport. Regional Offices assisted States in their regions to maintain aviation operations that ensured timely distribution of masks and medical supplies to States. Same assistance is currently provided for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

#### *Global Aviation Safety Strategy*

Safety is one of the highest priorities of ICAO Strategic Objectives. This Strategic Objective aims to enhance global civil aviation safety and focuses primarily on a State's effective safety oversight and its capabilities in the management of safety. The objective is set in the context of growing passenger and cargo movements, and the need to address efficiency and environmental sustainability. A safe aviation system contributes to the economic development of States and their industries. The Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) outlines the global strategy for triennium, to achieve ICAO's Safety Strategic Objective. The GASP is the document that presents the global strategy for the continuous improvement of aviation safety. Its purpose is to continually reduce fatalities, and the risk of fatalities, associated with accidents by guiding the harmonized development and implementation of regional and national aviation safety plans. States, regions and industry facilitate the implementation of the strategy presented in the GASP through regional and national aviation safety plans.

During 2020, ICAO continued its outreach to States, assisting them in the development of their national safety strategies. The organization published Doc 10131, *Manual on the Development of Regional and National Aviation Safety Plans*, to assist States identify safety issues, and develop a comprehensive strategy to prioritize the resources allocated to improving aviation safety. Guidance also focused on regional safety planning, and assistance among States, to provide technical expertise and emphasise the importance of a safety and sustainable aviation sector, in the context of national and regional economic development.

ICAO reviewed its strategy, to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aviation safety, and States' ability to allocate resources and fulfill their obligation related to effective safety oversight of the aviation sector. In 2021, an updated edition of the GASP is being developed, focusing on the global aviation disruption events and how to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic at the national, regional and international levels.

#### **Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all:**

ICAO's ongoing efforts to harmonize the global aviation facilitation policy framework enables air transport development that contributes to SDG 8 by achieving higher levels of economic productivity through industrial diversification, technological upgrading and innovation of aviation. The negative impacts of COVID-19 on civil aviation have undoubtedly stunted economic growth and increased unemployment amongst the millions involved in air transport and related industries such as tourism and trade. In response, ICAO has redoubled its efforts to enhance facilitation policy and improve implementation in order to drive the recovery of aviation. ICAO has been promoting the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration at State level, made possible through the convening of National Air Transport Facilitation Committees, in order to assure recovery in a safe manner based on consideration of all domains and knowledge of all risk mitigation measures that can be implemented. A training package on implementation (iPACK) has been rolled out in order to support direct capacity building with States, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for

whom capacity building is funded through ICAO's resource mobilization efforts. ICAO has also been promoting harmonization of mechanisms for the provision of passenger health data where appropriate to support safe air travel. The work involved the initial rollout of paper-based forms such as the ICAO Passenger Locator Form and Health Declaration Form, but more recently delineation of an enhanced framework for harmonization of digital tools for presentation of health-related information in the context of travel.

Throughout the crisis, ICAO has continued its work on a methodological framework document on the Aviation Satellite Account to measure the size of aviation-related direct gross domestic product (GDP) and to evaluate the economic contribution of aviation safety and air navigation related projects. The Organization also publishes the Aviation Benefits Report, in cooperation with related industry organizations, which provides a comprehensive view of the importance of aviation on supporting the global economy and generating social benefits through the prism of sustainable air transport solutions.

ICAO has initiated the development of a template study to measure the economic impact of policy changes in Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS), where aviation represents an essential lifeline to enhance connectivity in turn promoting greater tourism, trade and other vital business activities. In this regard, an air transport case study titled "*The impact of aviation reforms in the Dominican republic: a model of socioeconomic growth and development*" was developed and published in 2020 to provide a relevant and accurate representation of the impact of such measures on Small Developing Island States (SIDS) as well as other small developing economies, including meaningful insight for civil aviation planners and relevant ministries (tourism, finance, transport) on the returns on investments generated by the civil aviation sector.

ICAO develops, updates and customizes long-term traffic as well as air navigation planning forecasts, provides fuel consumption data that enable reports on CO2 emissions to the UNFCCC and harmonizes traffic databases. For enhanced statistical and analytical data collection, ICAO is also collecting and analyzing statistics on personnel in civil aviation globally and is also focusing on segmenting the information provided by States by age and gender. Analysis stemming from such a rich and whole data source will support decision makers to create and to invest opportunities to foster gender equality in aviation.

ICAO continuously assures that ICAO Member States priorities are reflected in tourism policies through the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and trade in services negotiations through the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this regard, ICAO is also heavily involved in COVID-19 restart and recovery efforts led by the Crisis Committee of the UNWTO as well as other organizations, such as the OECD, UNECE and UNCTAD, to ensure alignment across the global supply chain, sectors and modes of transport impacted by the crisis.

Lastly, ICAO Regional Offices in Africa support the enhancement of air transport connectivity and growth in Africa, through aviation infrastructure gap analysis and the operationalization of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), in coordination with the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). In this regard, a Project Implementation Agreement was signed between ICAO and AFCAC to foster implementation of the Joint Prioritized Action Plan.

## **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries:**

In 2014, ICAO launched the No Country Left Behind Initiative (NCLB) to strengthen efforts in support of ICAO's Strategic Objectives and the SDGs at the State level. Subsequently, the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A39-23, *No Country Left Behind (NCLB) Initiative*. The NCLB initiative aims at assisting its 193 Member States in effectively implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), policies, plans and programmes in a globally harmonized manner, as well as addressing any 'Significant Safety and Security Concerns' identified through audits, to ensure that all States have



access to the significant socio-economic benefits of air transport, which directly contributes to the achievement of the SDGs.

While usual ICAO activities would have included, inter alia, the convening of the ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN) to facilitate States' air services negotiations and to promote equal opportunities, these efforts of inclusiveness and equality have shifted and translated into the work of the ICAO's Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) to ensure that the recommendations and guidance provided to States are as inclusive and non-prescriptive as possible. This will be particularly important as the world enters a recovery phase to ensure that such recovery can happen on a global scale and in a non-discriminatory manner.

ICAO's efforts to harmonize approaches to facilitate a restart and recovery of civil aviation in support of the UN SDGs has been founded at all times upon its No Country Left Behind initiative. All measures that have been proposed in order to increase the efficiency of air travel in a safe and health-conscious manner, have followed a paper-first development approach to allow for adoption by the majority of States, irrespective of their wealth or level of technological advancement. The harmonized use of paper-based passenger locator forms and health declaration forms has been facilitated. Likewise, the barcode-based approach to the issuance of health proofs for international civil aviation proposed by CART allows cheap but effective issuance of secure paper documents based to the greatest extent possible on existing capabilities and infrastructure.

#### **Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns:**

The long-term post-pandemic strategies will inevitably need to be built on principle of sustainable development more than ever. The economically and environmentally sustainable growth of aviation is one of ICAO's angular principles, which defines all actions taken. This is traditionally translated through the ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF), which provides a platform for high-level government officials responsible for aviation, transport, economic planning and international development to exchange on policies, business models, regulatory processes and governance in support of a sustainable social, economic and environmental development of the regions. Furthermore, ICAO will convene a High-Level Conference on COVID-19 in October 2021 to address issues related to the challenges faced by the aviation industry during this crisis. An important component of these discussions will be the strengthening of political commitment by States to lead a sustainable recovery, build resilience for aviation and elevate these priorities in the global, regional and national agendas.

With the objective to help States and industry cope with economic fallout of the pandemic, ICAO has also developed a Guidance on Economic and Financial Measures. The guidance summarizes a range of possible measures that can be explored by States and the aviation companies to alleviate the imminent liquidity and financial strain on the industry, and more importantly, to strengthen the industry resilience to future crisis.

ICAO has been working towards a closer collaboration and procedural alignment among air transport stakeholders to ensure timely delivery of emergency and humanitarian aid, as well as PPE and medical supplies, including COVID-19 vaccines. ICAO's efforts in this regard have focused on, inter alia, working with States directly or through Regional offices to advance air transport liberalization through temporary lifting of restrictions and enable air cargo and e-commerce to support national, regional and global economic recoveries and developments. Furthermore, ICAO has worked with other partner organizations such as the World Customs Organization (WCO) to encourage States to facilitate air transport supply chain operations, which are a crucial element in the effective distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and related medical supplies.

#### **Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts:**

ICAO's Environmental programme directly contributes to attainment of this Goal, as it relates to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through addressing issues such as the reduction of the fossil carbon content of aviation fuel, increase in fuel efficiency of airplanes, as well as emissions trading schemes.

In order to address the impact of civil aviation on climate change, ICAO has set, since 2010, two global aspirational goals for the international civil aviation sector of 2% annual fuel efficiency improvement through 2050 and carbon neutral growth from 2020 onwards. To achieve these goals, ICAO has identified a basket of measures which include new technologies and standards, improved operational procedures, sustainable aviation fuels and market based measures. Since then work has been continuing on each one of those measures. Since 2011, ICAO has embarked on a campaign to urge States to develop their national action plans to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international civil aviation. In 2016, and after many years of development work, the ICAO Assembly adopted the first sectoral global market based system: the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). In 2017, ICAO adopted the first global technology Standard for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for any sector with the aim of encouraging more fuel efficient technologies into aeroplane designs. ICAO continued its work on CORSIA implementation elements, sustainable aviation fuels in addition to assistance and capacity building for States.

In 2020 and despite the pandemic, ICAO has successfully completed the development of all essential implementation elements of CORSIA, ahead of the start of CORSIA's pilot phase from 2021. ICAO is also exploring the feasibility of a long-term global aspirational goal for international aviation, as requested by the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly.

In addition, ICAO recognizes the need to identify the potential impacts of climate change on international aviation operations and related infrastructure, identify adaptation measures to address the potential climate change impacts and develop guidance on climate change risk assessment for international aviation, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations and the industry. In this vein, ICAO has published an Eco-Airport Toolkit e-collection, which includes a collection of documents that provide practical and ready-to-use information to support the development of airport infrastructure projects. One of the documents included in this e-collection is titled "Eco Design of Airport Buildings", which provides stakeholders with elements to consider when planning the eco-design of airport buildings, examples that can be learned from, and resources that can be utilized.

ICAO has developed a Climate Change Adaptation Synthesis report, which is aimed at identifying the impact of climate change on international aviation infrastructure and services, the level of awareness of stakeholders and possible actions to enhance resilience. These guidance documents are relevant to all ICAO Member States and bring particular added value to States.

Activities related to climate change have been supported through the Regional Offices. The ICAO Middle East Regional Office for instance maintained continuous communication with the State Action Plan and CORSIA Focal Points and facilitated the implementation of capacity-building activities (trainings), in coordination with HQ to some States to implement necessary measures for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. ICAO Eastern and Southern African Office encouraged strengthening of the civil/military coordination to improve flexible use of airspace.

## **Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:**

ICAO, through its Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP), develops and updates travel document specifications and guidance materials on evidence of identity, Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) and inspection systems and tools. Further, ICAO assists its Member States in building required capacity in this area through symposia, seminars and tailored assistance missions. ICAO has issued a guide to improve the level of security and integrity of Evidence of Identity (EOI) processes across the entire travel

document and border control management continuum. The Guide is intended to provide a means for States to assess their current EOI context, and design a comprehensive risk-based approach to identity establishment and validation using available documents and information.

### *Trafficking in Persons*

Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8, and 16 of the 2030 Agenda all touch upon the issue of human trafficking. As mentioned, ICAO and the civil aviation sector actively contribute to the achievement of 15 out of 16 SDGs, and this includes SDGs 5, 8 and 16 which draw specific attention to our shared priority to end trafficking in persons. Following the launch of Cir 352, *Guidelines for Training Cabin Crew on Identifying and Responding to Trafficking in Persons*, developed by the Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ICAO collaborated again with OHCHR on comprehensive new guidelines. The new Cir 357, *Guidelines for Reporting Trafficking in Persons by Flight and Cabin Crew* is intended to assist States, their law enforcement authorities, and operators in managing crew reports of suspected cases of trafficking in persons in aviation.

In addition, in 2020, ICAO launched the *Tool for Capacity Building of Cabin Crew on Identifying and Responding to Trafficking in Persons*, in collaboration OHCHR. This is a free-of-charge eLearning, for use by States and operators, that enables trainees to: understand the issue of trafficking in persons, including the elements of trafficking; why it happens and what is being done to combat it; identify potential cases of trafficking in persons; respond to suspected trafficking in persons, including producing a report of the occurrence; and obtain a certificate of completion at the end of the e-learning session.

ICAO is also an active member of the Interagency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), the UN's lead policy forum mandated by the UN General Assembly to improve coordination among UN agencies and other relevant international organizations to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including protection and support for victims of trafficking. ICAO provides inputs to the ICAT Plan of Action and promotes the role of the aviation community in combating human trafficking, as part of a multi-modal, comprehensive approach.

### **Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development:**

Partnerships and collaborative relationships are central to ICAO's core mission. As the global forum of States for international civil aviation, ICAO proactively fosters cooperation, collaboration and coordinated approaches to achieve its five Strategic Objectives.

ICAO's efforts to address COVID-19 impacts on civil aviation and drive sustainable recovery from the pandemic have been based on extensive community outreach and collaboration. With the support of its regional offices network and through organization of regular meetings with regional organizations representing, not only the aviation sector, but also related fields such as tourism, trade, labour and humanitarian affairs, the organization has remained abreast of diverse challenges being experienced across the globe and had the opportunity to assess the impacts of any proposed measures in different regions and on different domains of economic activity. This international cross-sectoral effort has assured true partnership in the evolution of policy to boost civil aviation as a facilitator of sustainable development and provides the basis for the on-going fruitful implementation of this policy.

While the COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on our industry, at regional and national levels, it remains critical to ensure that policy frameworks, national development plans and national budget documents reflect and correspond to the priorities and challenges of the aviation sector in light of the facilitating role it plays to make the SDGs a reality in less than ten years from now.



In order to yield greater impact at the national level, ICAO has recently developed guidance material on the establishment National Aviation Planning Frameworks which aim at ensuring sustainable development of air transport by prioritizing and coordinating the implementation of initiatives to improve the safety, security, facilitation, capacity and efficiency of their air transport systems. The National Aviation Planning Framework provides an implementation roadmap of long-term initiatives for enhancing air transport systems through effective implementation of SARPs and policies. Including and elevating the priority of the aviation sector into national development plans supported by robust air transport sector strategic plans and civil aviation master plans, contributes to the attainment of the SDGs.

Recognizing the importance of Civil Aviation Master Planning as a key planning and budgetary tool for facilitating development of civil aviation infrastructure and for supporting the growth of relevant economic sectors such as transportation, tourism, trade, and cargo, the guidance material on the National Aviation Planning Framework will be complemented by a dedicated Civil Aviation Master Plan (CAMP) training project. CAMP Project, which is funded through China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SCAAF), will be developed in 2021.

**Additional input under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”:**

**On Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

ICAO is the custodian agency of global indicator 9.1.2 Passenger and Freight Volumes, by Mode of Transport. The data and analysis provided is reflected in the annual global SDG report and in the [online UN platform](#) for monitoring the progress towards the SDGs. This indicators assists ICAO Member States to monitor and benchmark air transport infrastructure and to facilitate related investments. These actions drive the sustainable growth of air transport and benefit from the potential offered by intermodal transport.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ICAO has been working with States, other UN agencies, development banks, the industry and other partners, to deliver data and analysis that supports decision-making during the crisis. The pandemic outlined more than ever the critical need for reliable aviation data and analysis.

In collaboration with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) of Turkey, ICAO has developed [COVID-19 impact dashboards](#), which allows States to monitor and assess the evolving impact of COVID-19 and leverage key indicators to make informed, data-driven decisions.

ICAO has also worked closely with the UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and has contributed to their publication “*How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective*”, which provides latest information on how COVID-19 is affecting different aspects of public and private life, from economic and environmental fluctuations to changes that affect individuals in terms of income, education, employment and violence and changes affecting public services such as civil aviation and postal services.

ICAO through its Regional Offices such as the EUR/NAT Office undertook many activities to support and strengthen the civil aviation authorities through technical assistance projects, webinars, regular contacts with the States, as well as EUR/NAT DGCA monthly meetings to keep the General Directors abreast on the latest development at ICAO.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, and as part of the central role of ICAO to articulate the global recovery plans and actions, the EUR/NAT Regional Office has been actively involved in various activities to support States and the aviation industry at regional and national levels, in collaboration with relevant international and regional organizations:

- The EUR/NAT Regional Office conducted a workshop on the issue of sustainable funding of Civil Aviation Authorities for sharing experience on challenges, best practices and lessons learned, supporting a cooperative and collaborative approach with the industry, regional and international organizations, including regional organizations and financial institutions, to identify common solutions and guidance.
- To facilitate preparation for vaccine transportation particularly in the Eastern part Europe, the ICAO EUR/NAT Office with International and Regional Organizations have developed joint webinars to inform Director General of Civil Aviation Authorities on the preparation and implementation plan for COVID-19 vaccines delivery by air.

### **Further COVID-19 Related Activities of the ICAO Secretariat**

The Secretariat COVID-19 Emergency Programme Group (SCEPG) has continued to lead and coordinate the Secretariat's activities outlined in the Global Implementation Roadmap (GIR) (State Letter 2020/80 refers). This section of the paper provides updates to the information contained in the Oral Secretary General Report, i.e. *Progress Report on Implementation of the CART Report Recommendations and Related Secretariat Action Plan*.

**COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC).** The CRRIC, which was launched on 3 July 2020, incorporates latest information on COVID-19 related activities by ICAO.

**Implementation Packages (iPacks).** Three iPacks, related to facilitation, safety risk management and aviation security, have been developed. Two additional iPacks, related to aerodrome restart and Public Health Corridors (PHCs) are under development and planned to be completed by the end of 2020. Global plans have been established for the deployment of iPacks in all ICAO Regions. The implementation of these plans is projected to start in November 2020 and span over 2021, benefitting at least 20 States.

**Safety operational measures.** With respect to the COVID-19 Contingency Related Differences (CCRD) sub-system of the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) system, 31 States have provided updates to indicate that they no longer needed alleviations and that they still accepted those implemented in other States. This progress is being tracked in the active alleviation dashboard: <https://www.icao.int/safety/COVID-19OPS/Pages/Status-Dashboard.aspx>.

To assist States in restoring “new” normal operations, the Secretariat, with the assistance of subject matter experts nominated to panels and other ICAO groups, had developed Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) which are now slowly being withdrawn and developing additional guidance material to support States in the new phase of the pandemic.

Working with expert groups, a tool was developed to support the prioritization of aircraft maintenance organizations surveillance activities based on risk, which was included in the iPack related to aviation safety. A one-day COVID 19 Aviation Safety Risk Management virtual course as well as an Aviation Safety Risk Management Fundamentals virtual course are available.

The Regional Safety Oversight Organizations Cooperative Platform (RSOO-CP) has coordinated activities of RSOOs, which have played a role in regional harmonization of State inputs to COVID-19 Contingency-Related Differences, developing risk management tools, and providing guidance to States and industry to support return to normal operations in various regions of the world.

**Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA).** Further guidance material relating to passenger and repatriation flights using the PHCs were published, together with a survey to ascertain State practices relating to testing and quarantine (State letter 2020/97 refers). The PHC concept has been expanded to support implementation of the CART

recommendations and guidance (including implementation activities of industry partners and developing additional guidance to facilitate the opening of public health corridors between States).

To this end, a new publication, *Manual on Testing and Cross-Border Risk Management Measures*, has been submitted to CART for consideration. It provides States with guidance on a risk-based multi-layer mitigation approach that might be applied in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 between travellers and States while at the same time allowing for a re-opening of borders and economies. It includes a description of risk management measures, a risk management decision making tool, a review of possible testing protocols; and a series of examples to help States in their decision making process.

**ICAO Seven Regional Offices.** Regional Offices continued seeking political commitment by States under their accreditation to implementing the CART recommendations and guidance through various means. In collaboration with relevant international and regional organizations and in liaison with Headquarters, Regional Offices have undertaken activities, including but not limited to: a) regular communication and coordination with States and stakeholders through virtual meetings (including DGCA meetings), webinars and regional coordination groups; b) facilitation to the CAPSCA programme implementation; c) identifying and addressing States' needs and operational challenges; d) assistance to States for reporting on their level of implementation on the CRRIC as well as coordinating exchange of information and experience between States; and e) supporting the planning for the restart and recovery of aviation operations.

**Last words:** Aviation plays an instrumental role as a worldwide enabler in times of crisis through vital air cargo services and in support of global food, medicine and other supply chains, as well as timely emergency and humanitarian response capabilities during disasters and public health emergencies.

Aviation's importance is also strongly underscored by its unique ability to address the special needs of the poorest and weakest segments of the international community, as well as in transporting and distributing COVID-19 vaccines.

A post-COVID-19 recovery, including full resumption of travel and trade and the return to economic growth, will be possible only through the rapid worldwide network and connectivity provided by aviation. For example, travel and tourism together represent over 10% of global economic activity, and over 55% of international tourists have been relying on air connectivity for much of their success. Contributions such as this only begin to explain aviation's vital role in helping countries achieve the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.