

**Summary of Discussion of the ACAO/IATA /ICAO - Overflight Clearance (OVFC)  
Permissions Teleconference/Meeting**

*(Thursday, August 13, 2020, from 10:00 to 12:00 UTC)*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Middle East DGCA Teleconference of 23 April underlined the importance of taking all necessary measures to facilitate a collaborative approach for restarting commercial passengers' flights and established the MID Region Recovery Plan Task Force (RPTF) to provide necessary guidance and facilitate an harmonized restart of operations in a sustainable, safe, secure and orderly manner as soon as practicable taking into consideration the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decisions by International and National Public Health Authorities.

1.2. The RPTF consists of the 4 work streams: Public Health Requirements, Operational Safety Measures, Airport & Passengers Facilitation and the Air Navigation Services/Air Traffic Management.

1.3. As part of the WS ANS, the ACAO/IATA /ICAO - Overflight Clearance (OVFC) Permissions Teleconference/Meeting was held on Thursday, August 13, 2020 from 10:00 to 12:00 UTC, using MS team facility.

1.4. The meeting/teleconference was attended by a total of fifty-three (53) participants from thirteen (13) States (Bahrain, Comores, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen), two (02) Airlines and four (04) Organizations (ACAO, IATA, ICAO and IFATCA). The list of participants is at **Attachment 1**.

1.5. The main objectives of the teleconference are the following:

- a. Present the Collaborative Solution, RPTF introduction and work-streams WS4 ANS and ATM high level focus areas and Overflight Clearance (OVFC) Permissions specific activities;
- b. Provide an overview of the challenges surrounding OVFC Permission; and
- c. Agree on necessary actions to ensure granting speedy OVFC Permission, in line with the Chicago Convention of 1944 and the basic principles of International Law.

**2. OPENING**

2.1 Mr. Mohamed Rejeb, ANS and Safety Expert at ACAO, welcomed all participants and thanked them for accepting the invitation to join the teleconference. He highlighted that the restart of operations in a safe, secure, sustainable and orderly manner can only result from collective efforts. A closer and continuous collaboration will be beneficial for information sharing and a harmonized global response suitable for all States, regions and stakeholders. This conference will therefore be both important and useful to enable the Airlines, represented by IATA to highlight the challenges and emerging issues surrounding OVFC Permission and propose concrete recommendations and actions.

### 3. DISCUSSIONS

3.1 The meeting was apprised about the established Recovery Plan Task Force (RPTF) and its four technical work streams:

- Stream 1: Public Health Requirements/measures,
- Stream 2: Operational Safety Measures,
- Stream 3: Airport & Passengers Facilitation, and
- Stream 4: Air Navigation Services/Air Traffic Management.

3.2 The Meeting was also informed about the objective of the Overflight Clearance (OVFC) Permissions key activity under ANS WS, to ensure Facilitation & Flexibility and relief of OVFC Permissions and the work plan of the Key activity, in particular:

- Communicate with States for OVFC permission relief during the crisis and restart recovery phases;
- Identify OVFC permission Constraints/difficulties and initiate resolution interventions;
- Develop the "File n Fly" concept document or alternative simplified and standardized process for facilitating the OVFC permissions process;
- Coordinate with concerned States to facilitate implementations of 'File n Fly' OVFC permissions or alternative simplified process.

3.3 Mr. Protus Seda, Assistant Director Safety & Flight Operations AFI. IATA, provided a presentation covering the OVFC permission challenges faced by Airlines and highlighted on:

- Lack of access to OVFC office PoC;
- Limited OVFC office hours of operations
- Approval delays & Turn-around time from application to permit grant.
- Lead time requirement
- Duplication of Information (ICAO FPL)
- Lack of standardization in the publication of OVFC permission request in the States Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP).
- Permit validity period
- Airline staff constraints (H24)

3.4 IATA presented a potential solution to the above challenge in the use of ICAO flight plans in a concept of 'File n Fly'. The ICAO flight plan can be used as an alternative means of compliance for State overflight permit requirements. Flight plans have adequate information required by States. is fit a fit for purpose with regards to satisfying requirements for OVFC permits. 'File n Fly' concept is not new, and it has been applied elsewhere successfully thereby providing the aviation industry with favourable business environment.

3.5 Mr. Mohamed Rejeb, ANS and Safety Expert at ACAO, also provided an analysis and recommendations relating to Overflight clearance permissions process in term of certain parameters such as documentation requirements, operating hours, permit lead time, validity and Focal points and contact details.

3.6 After the presentation, a round table discussion took place to address some questions

and participants were asked:

- Do you support ‘File n Fly’ concept and what is your opinion and comments on ‘File n Fly’ concept?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the concept?
- What are the most difficult challenges faced by the OVFC Permission entity amid the COVID-19?

#### **4. STATE VIEWS AND COMMENTS ON ‘FILE N FLY’ CONCEPT**

4.1 States views were ultimately supporting the concept but there is need to have internal coordination within States whether with Military authority and High level authority within CAA to decide on the concept.

4.2 A proposal was tabled by some members’ states consist of kind of CDM related to AOVF where states can share their process with other States and Airlines. It also proposed to set up an automatic system for processing overflight authorization requests which could be adopted by States.

4.3 It was noted that some members’ states have already implemented the process under other name and have been doing it since years.

4.4 States proposed to make available kind of platform where they can share the best practices. In this regard the RPTF platform under ICAO MID webpage can be used as the sharing platform.

4.5 Recognising the diversity of Member States in term of volume of traffic number of airports and “one size fits all” solution may not respond to States’ requirements.

4.6 Billing issues and payment of overflight fees linked with file and fly concept and the need to find a solution before moving much further. To address these issues a proposal of sort of registry for File and fly system requirement for airline to take advantage of this concept was also highlighted.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

5.1 The meeting recognized the importance of working together CAAs, International organisations and Airlines to deal with the Overflight Clearance (OVFC) Permissions issues, in a coordinated and coherent manner with a view to support the standardization of submitting and granting OVFC.

5.2 Therefore, the meeting has agreed that:

- Each State to discuss the way ahead internally on the ‘File n Fly’ concept, in particular enhance engagement in the Civil-Military coordination on OVFC process efficiencies
- Establish an OVFC CDM and conduct continuous meetings to address operational challenges associated with OVFC and share States best practices on facilitating and granting speedy approvals,
- To have continued coordination, collaboration and dialog between States, Airlines and international organizations.

#### **6. AOB AND CLOSING**

6.1 Participants had commended the determined efforts of the various international organizations initiatives that were working in this important subject.

6.2 The Meeting was closed by Mr. Mohamed Rejeb, ANS and Safety Expert at ACAO, who thanked participants for their participation.

6.3 All States were invited to share their views on the 'File n Fly' concept and their best practices on the authorization procedures during the next teleconference which will be scheduled in the last quarter of the year 2020.

**- END -**

## ACAO/IATA /ICAO - Overflight Clearance (OVFC) Permissions Teleconference/Meeting

## List of Participants

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