



International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG/18 and RASG-MID/8 Virtual Meeting

(15-22 February 2021)

Agenda Item 2: Global and Regional Developments
2.3 COVID-19 Impact on aviation

ANSP PREPARATION FOR GLOBAL PANDEMICS

(Presented by the United Arab Emirates)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the actions taken by the UAE in response to the COVID 19 Pandemic and suggests an adoption of a standardized approach to future pandemics.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3

REFERENCES

- ICAO Doc. 10144 - ICAO Handbook for CAAs on the Management of Aviation Safety Risks related to COVID-19
- ICAO MID Doc 0003 - MID Region ATM Contingency Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Article – 14 of the Chicago Convention “Prevention of Spread of disease” states each contracting State agrees to take effective spread of disease measures to prevent the spread by means of air navigation of cholera, typhus (epidemic), smallpox, yellow fever, plague, and such other communicable diseases. The contracting States shall from time to time decide to designate, and to that end, contracting States will keep in close consultation with the agencies concerned with international regulations relating to sanitary measures applicable to aircraft. Such consultation shall be without prejudice to the application of any existing international convention on this subject to which the contracting States may be parties.

1.2 It is to be stressed that any preparation can only be successful if all affected stakeholders from an Air Navigation Service Provider level include, the State Competent Authority, all aspects of Air Traffic Control (En-Route/Area Control Centre (ACC), Approach, Tower etc.) should be consulted. In addition, advice should be provided for Airspace Management (ASM) and Air Traffic Flow and Capacity Management (ATFCM) as well as Aeronautical Information Services (AIS). Each involved party must ensure to identify potential problems that should be addressed in designing the action plans, or mitigated as part of a safety analysis.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The global aviation industry saw an unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in early Q2 2020. The extreme reduction in air tourism augmented by geographical travel restrictions had a

catastrophic effect on the industry. Only demand and supply for cargo helped to keep some global aviation sectors in a state of 'Crisis Management' whilst other sectors failed instantly with little or no supply and demand. MID Region was no exception to this especially where aviation represents a substantial share of the national GDP of States.

2.2 ICAO's business continuity plan was activated as of Tuesday, 17 March 2020 for ICAO HQ and all Regional Offices and very quickly the MID Region started to coordinate and share COVID-19 information, measures and guidelines with its member States. On an international level ICAO established the Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) which developed several reports and guidance materials for industry and states in order to restart the international air transport sector and recover from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis. ICAO MID Recovery Plan Task Force (RPTF) was also established to monitor global restart and recovery developments and ensure the harmonization, and where necessary regional customization, of the implementation of these global developments at the Regional level.

2.3 Within the UAE, there was a clear understanding that collaboration was going to be the key to any endurance of the Pandemic from a business continuity aspect. Hence similarly to international activities, on the national level the UAE established the "Aviation Resumption Accelerators Task Force", the purpose of the task force was to identify the challenges, plan cohesive return to normal operations, monitor the latest development and share the knowledge between all UAE aviation stakeholders.

2.4 Using the existing and developed guidelines and also taking into account the circumstances within the UAE, guidelines were implemented by the Air Navigation Sector of the GCAA at the Sheikh Zayed Air Navigation Area Control Centre.

2.5 A prime purpose of the guide was to provide information and processes to help ANSPs to identify and decide the contingency strategies and concept of operation best suited to meet their needs in certain circumstances. The objective of the guide was to enable certificate holders in their business continuity planning in response to any emerging global pandemic. The guide covered the following key business operational risks:

- a. Processes and business functions
- b. Communications both internal and external

2.6 This guide helped us with the following:

- a. Minimise health risk to employees
- b. Minimise the risk of premises becoming a node of transmission
- c. Ensure plans are in place should employees be quarantined or infected
- d. Ensure alternative arrangements so that business operations can continue

2.7 The guidelines describes a planning process and provides a menu of checklists to benchmark existing contingency plans or work in progress. These guidelines are primarily intended for use by the civil ANSPs and the military ANSPs (insofar as they have been certified). Non-certified military ANSPs servicing GAT, may find the information useful in the context of developing or updating military contingency plans.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Amend ICAO MID Region ATM Contingency Plan to include provision for pandemics and;
- b) Encourage states to adopt a unified the contingency response and joint policy to strengthen future collaboration.

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