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(NACC/DCA/11)**

Varadero, Cuba, 28-30 June 2023

**Agenda Item 5: NAM/CAR Regional Aviation Security/Facilitation Implementation**

**MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY MEASURES FOR SECURITY TAMPER EVIDENT BAGS (STEB) BETWEEN COCESNA MEMBER STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION**

(Presented by Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Working Paper presents information on the Memorandum of Understanding for mutual recognition of civil aviation security measures for security tamper-evident bags (STEB) signed by COCESNA Member States in Central America, for safe transport of liquids and gels purchased in free stores within the international airports of the Central American region, which originate in one of the signatory States and are directed in transshipment operations through the region to their final destination.

To apply effective security measures for liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGS), aimed at harmonizing procedures between States, facilitating the passenger experience through the region's airports, and consequently the benefit of our region for minimize economic impacts on the aviation industry.

<b>Action:</b>	Suggested actions are presented in Section 5.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic Objective 3 – Security &amp; Facilitation</li></ul>
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ICAO Annex 9</li><li>• ICAO Annex 17</li><li>• ICAO Doc 8973</li></ul>

**1. Introduction**

1.1 As part of the commitment to protect the security of civil aviation, COCESNA Member States, through the Civil Aviation Authorities and in coordination with the Central American AVSEC Regional Group, made up of AVSEC specialists from the Central American region, considering the importance of the provisions of Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, in particular Standard 4.6.7 and established National Requirements, have promoted the establishment of an agreement of understanding for the mutual recognition and validation of security tamper-evident bags

(STEB) and security measures. implemented for the safe transport of liquids and gels, to protect the security of civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference.

1.2 Through the agreement, responsibility is assumed to carry out verifications directly, which may include on-site or remote validation of compliance with ICAO recommendations regarding STEBs and accepting the declaration of the parties, that they have complied with such recommendations, regarding security measures for STEBs, including their full application at airports.

1.3 Within the applicability of the agreement are the airports of the signatory States Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala that have transshipment/transfer operations. Other COCESNA Member States that do not yet carry out international transshipment/transfer operations and/or any other State that wishes to validate the use of STEBs and form part of this agreement (unilaterally, bilaterally, or multilaterally) may join. The scope integrates passengers in transshipment/transfer and their goods purchased in free stores within the restricted security zone of the international airports of the States that are part of the agreement.

## **2. Discussion**

2.1 Considering Standard 4.6.7 of Annex 17, which establishes "each contracting state shall ensure that goods and supplies entering restricted security zones are subject to appropriate security controls that may include a security inspection process in the supply chain", the purpose of the agreement in the region is to promote the security of civil aviation through the adoption and execution of good practices and harmonization among Member States, in order to improve their compliance and security oversight capabilities of aviation.

2.2 The actions that are carried out and that are part of the implementation of the agreement for the mutual recognition of security measures in civil aviation for STEB, for the safe transport of purchased liquids and gels in the free stores inside the international airports of the Central American region, which originate in one of the signatory States and are directed in transshipment operations through the region to their destination are:

- a) Recognize compliance with the security measures for STEBs with the States that express their intention to conclude the agreement with the interested parties.
- b) Validate the technical specifications and compliance with ICAO recommendations regarding STEBs.
- c) Affirm the reciprocal obligation of the parties involved in the arrangement to protect the security of civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference.
- d) Adopt the implementation of good practices and harmonization among Member States in aviation security.
- e) Integrate a commission for the validation and continuous supervision of the measures adopted by the Member States.

### **3. Developments**

3.1 The commitment accepted by the Member States of COCESNA has allowed the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding for the mutual recognition of security measures of civil aviation for STEB, signed by the Member States of COCESNA in Central America Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala, for the safe transport of liquids and gels purchased in free stores within the international airports of the region, originating in one of the signatory States and directed in transshipment/transfer operations through the region to their final destination.

3.2 The agreement signed by the States mentioned last March 2023, has begun its implementation effectively during April and May of the current year, allowing the transport of liquids and gels safely and without inconvenience for passengers and their purchases in the free stores of the international airports of the region. The foregoing has generated the interest of other States outside of COCESNA to form part of the agreement and thus establish the implementation of harmonized measures in their connecting/transfer operations to and from Central America.

### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 Aviation security, as a fundamental basis for the growth and sustainability of the aviation industry, requires the integration of harmonized measures applied by the Member States, where the exchange of knowledge and experiences that allow the execution of good practices and opportunities for standardized improvement in order to raise the levels of compliance and give recognition to the Central American region as a promoter of actions in the field of aviation security, which guide to guarantee the protection of civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference and, at the same time, the reliability that the region offers to other regions in the application of effective procedures through national security systems.

4.2 COCESNA Member States are committed to:

- a) Establish and accept the technical specifications, as recommended by ICAO for STEB validation.
- b) Accept the declaration of commitment and validation and compliance of the agreement with respect to the technical specifications of the STEBs, stating the faithful compliance with the ICAO recommendations, including their full application in the airports.
- c) Ensure that goods and supplies entering security-restricted areas are subject to appropriate security controls, which may include a supply chain security process or inspection.

**5. Suggested Actions**

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Promote with the States the integration into the memorandum of understanding for mutual recognition of civil aviation security measures for STEB.
- b) Seek the harmonization and standardization of the procedures applied for the handling of the STEB in the transport of merchandise acquired in the free shops of the international airports.
- c) Make States aware of the sustainability of their reliable aviation security systems.
- d) Strengthen cooperation and information exchange between States and interested parties.
- e) Recognize the security measures for the handling of STEB and security measures implemented for the transport of liquids and gels.
- f) Establish a Technical Commission made up of AVSEC specialists from the States adhering to the agreement, which allows the validation and continuous monitoring of the established measures.