Statement from the International Civil Aviation (ICAO) Asia and Pacific Regional Office
Agenda Item 8.5 – Strengthening public health emergency preparedness and response
in the South-East Asia Region

Greeting from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Asia and Pacific Regional Office
to the 74th Session of this Regional Committee!

The ICAO Asia and Pacific Office wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate the WHO Regional
Office for South-East Asia for conducting this important Regional Committee Session virtually. We are also thankful for
the opportunity to provide a Statement under the subject, public health preparedness and response.

International civil aviation has been built around the Convention on International Civil Aviation
concluded in December 1944. The Article 14 of the Convention talks about the ‘Prevention of spread of disease’ and
stipulates that each contracting State to the Convention agrees to take effective measures to prevent the spread of
communicable diseases by means of air navigation and in doing so, to keep in close consultation with the agencies
concerned with international regulations relating to sanitary measures.

In cognizance of the Foreword Statement of the International Health Regulations which highlights
that ‘A central and historic responsibility for the World Health Organization has been the management of the global
regime for the control of the international spread of disease’, a perfect overlap between the mandate of our two
specialized agencies, WHO and ICAO emerges, paving the way to work collaboratively to support member States to
develop, maintain, improve and strengthen their public health emergency preparedness and response plans.

Following the SARS outbreak in 2003 and after a resolution of ICAO in 2004 and the implementation
of the International Health Regulations in 2005, ICAO launched the CAPSCA programme in 2006, which stands for the
‘Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation’.

CAPSCA is a collaborative network of States, international, regional, national and local stakeholders
representing multiple sectors which is managed by ICAO with the support from the WHO. Its primary objectives are to
assist States with the implementation of the ICAO public health related Standards and Recommended Practices and
the WHO International Health Regulations (2005) and to improve preparedness planning and rapid response to public
health emergencies that might affect the aviation sector.

One of the highlights amongst many a deliverable of CAPSCA is the on-site assistance provided to
States in their capacity building efforts for the development of national aviation preparedness plans relating to public
health emergencies in aviation.

Such Technical Assistance visits conducted in coordination with WHO and by a team of subject
matter experts would evaluate the existing Public Health Emergency provisions in the aviation system of the State and
develop a gap analysis, promote and facilitate communication, cooperation and collaboration within the civil aviation
sector stakeholders as well as between the public health sector, provides awareness training on ICAO and WHO Public
Health Emergency requirements for the aviation sector and provides advice and guidance to strengthen public health
emergency planning in the aviation sector.

These Technical Assistance visits have been provided to 14 airports in 12 States so far in the Asia
Pacific region by the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office through the CAPSCA initiative which includes Bangladesh,
Bhutan, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand within the WHO South East Asia region.

ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office wishes to reiterate the mandate to assist the States to
strengthen their national aviation preparedness plans relating to public health emergencies in aviation and in that
regard, stands ready to support any State in the WHO South East Asia Region and elsewhere in the Asia and Pacific
region in general.

I wish the proceedings of the 74th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO South East Asia very
productive outcomes.

Thank you.