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FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

TWELFTH MEETING

(13 to 23 July 2021, Virtual)

Agenda Item 3: Policy and Regulatory Issues

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

(Presented by Airports Council International (ACI) and International Air Transport Association (IATA))

SUMMARY

Wildlife trafficking is a global problem. Since air transport is a frequently used method of transport for traffickers, airports and airlines are ideally positioned to assist, both through training of their own staff in recognizing and dealing with trafficking situations, as well as raising public awareness. This paper shares the efforts made by ACI, IATA and their Members and proposes the addition of a Recommended Practice to Annex 9 to ensure that appropriate reporting and coordination mechanisms are in place in Contracting States to help combat wildlife trafficking.

Action by the FAL Panel:

The Facilitation Panel is invited to:

- a) note the efforts of the aviation industry in tackling proactively wildlife trafficking;
- b) recognize the need for an integrated framework that includes coordination between different stakeholders; and
- c) consider the adoption of a new Recommended Practice in Annex 9 to recommend the adoption by States of an integrated framework for the reporting of, and response to, suspected wildlife trafficking cases and sharing of information.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wildlife trafficking includes the importing and exporting of protected species of wild animals and plants, derivatives or products thereof in contravention to international and/or domestic law. Depending on the jurisdiction, it can also include smuggling, poaching, and illegal capture or collection.¹

1.2 The illegal wildlife trade (IWT) excluding timber and fish, is estimated to be worth between US\$7 and US\$23 billion per year making it the fourth largest illegal global trade.² If combined with forestry crimes and Illegal fisheries, the value can go up to US\$30- US\$95 billion per year.³

1.3 The current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has created a new awareness of zoonotic diseases and the need to understand its risks.⁴ The IWT has been identified as a factor that can increase the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases.⁵ Proper sanitary controls and quarantine requirements are also at risk of being disregarded by wildlife traffickers.⁶

1.4 Wildlife trafficking has significant environmental, social and economic consequences⁷, hampering the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals⁸ such as 3,8,14,15,16 and 17: Health and well-being, decent work and economic growth, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships.

1.5 The UNGA *Resolution 71/326 Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife*, “Calls upon United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates (...), to continue to support efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife, (...) to improve cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach by the international community”.

1.6 Over 180 countries have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and many governments are actively tackling the issue through the development of counter-trafficking policies. Effective collaboration and positive action from all stakeholders are needed.

1.7 Wildlife trafficking is a global problem. Air transport is a frequently used method of transport for traffickers as it efficiently connects many destinations. Airports and air transport routes provide opportunities for enforcement authorities to detect and intercept illegal wildlife. The aviation industry is thus well positioned to assist the effort to disrupt wildlife trafficking.

2. INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES

2.1 ACI and IATA are committed to assisting in the fight. Both are signatories of the *United for Wildlife (UfW) Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration* by The Royal Foundation of The

¹ UNODC. *Criminalization of wildlife trafficking* (2019).

² UNEP-INTERPOL. *The Rise of Environmental Crime* (2016).

³ Ibid. World Bank Group, UNEP, UNDP & others *Analysis of International Funding to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade* (2016).

⁴ WHO. *WHO-convened global study of origins of SARS-CoV-2: China Part*. (2021) and *Statement on the seventh meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*. (2021).

⁵ UNEP *Preventing the Next Pandemic- Zoonotic Diseases and How to Break the Chain of Transmission* (2020).

⁶ UNODC. *World Wildlife Crime Report 2020*. OIE, WHO & Others *Contributing to One World, One Health™-A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal-Human-Ecosystems Interface*. (2008).

⁷ United Nations General Assembly *Resolution 71/326 of 11 September 2017, Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife*

⁸ United Nations General Assembly *Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. With over 200 signatories and over 120 transport sector companies from across the globe among them, the declaration has become a landmark action plan.

2.2 ACI and IATA are Members of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership⁹, a key element of the concerted international response to addressing wildlife poaching and associated criminal activities worldwide. Through the partnership, ACI and IATA have developed a variety of resources available on their web sites for aviation stakeholders to use.

2.3 ACI is developing guidance to help airports meet the UfW Buckingham Palace Declaration commitments and has recently developed a handbook and an e-module specifically for airports containing possible actions, references to relevant materials and case studies. IATA has developed guidance and amended protocols and procedures including the Live Animal Regulations that lowers the risk of exploitation and has launched a wildlife certification scheme that provides independent assurance that an airline is delivering on its wildlife commitments. Many airports and airlines have joined the fight against wildlife crime.

2.4 ACI World's commitment to the UfW Buckingham Palace Declaration and support to the ROUTES Partnership was re-affirmed in a [resolution against wildlife trafficking](#) adopted by the Twenty-sixth ACI World General Assembly in 2016. The Thirtieth ACI World General Assembly adopted in 2020 a [resolution encouraging airports to support the protection of biodiversity, and thereby also help averting future pandemics](#). In June 2016, IATA's 72nd Annual General Meeting adopted a Resolution on the Illegal Trade in Wildlife which provides a clear and unequivocal statement of the airlines' position on wildlife trafficking. ACI and IATA strongly support a collaborative and comprehensive approach to better understand the risk of spill-over of emerging infections from animal to human populations and vice versa.

2.5 The issue of wildlife trafficking has been raised at previous ICAO Assemblies and Panels. In 2018, IATA submitted to the 10th Facilitation Panel an Information Paper¹⁰ on ensuring that airlines and aviation contribute to combatting the IWT. Information Papers¹¹ were also presented by both IATA and ACI to the 40th Assembly, which were noted¹².

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 In response to the threats of wildlife trafficking, enforcement agencies focus inspections on inbound flights including the use of scanning technology, which impedes passenger and cargo clearances and contributes to space constraints in arrival terminals, impacting facilitation. Information related to the nature, scale and consequences of the illegal transport of wildlife is rarely exchanged between Contracting States, airlines and airports. This reluctance to share information undermines cooperation and inhibits aviation stakeholder engagement on this serious criminal activity.

¹⁰ IP/6 presented by IATA (Ensuring that airlines and aviation contribute to combatting the illegal wildlife trade)

¹¹ WP/199 (Prevention of illegal wildlife trafficking via commercial aviation) presented by IATA; and WP/488 (Airports' efforts against wildlife trafficking) presented by ACI

¹² ICAO Assembly Fortieth Session Montréal, 24 September – 4 October 2019 Executive Committee, Report and Minutes (Doc. 10136).

3.2 As the nature and scale of exploitation of the air transport network by wildlife traffickers emerges, the illegal wildlife trade can undermine safety and security through coercion and intimidation of air transport and enforcement staff.

3.3 Airport and airline operators can support in the fight against wildlife trafficking in different ways. Considering the negative environmental, health, social and economic impacts on operators and the communities they serve, wildlife trafficking is often considered under operators' sustainability umbrellas. Activities include adopting a policy, raising awareness among staff, the public and the community, as well as training and partnerships, e.g. with local or international conservational NGOs, to build expertise.¹³

3.4 To enhance, complement and make these activities more efficient, enforcement agencies should share information and intelligence with aviation stakeholders, establish effective reporting channels, take appropriate actions and provide feedback. In turn, the aviation sector is rapidly modernizing with automation and digitization, which allows it to share more information with enforcement authorities.

3.5 In summary, while training and awareness of aviation staff are crucial, their effectiveness relies on the existence of integrated reporting, response and feedback mechanisms involving the appropriate authorities. For this reason, ACI and IATA propose the addition of a Recommended Practice to Annex 9 that encourages Contracting States to take measures to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are implemented to combat wildlife trafficking, including reporting mechanisms, relevant points of contact for airport and airline operators, appropriate enforcement response and the sharing of information. Suggested wording is set out in the **Appendix**.

4. ACTION BY THE FAL PANEL

The FAL Panel is invited to:

- a) note the efforts of the aviation industry in tackling proactively wildlife trafficking;
- b) recognize the need for an integrated framework that includes coordination between different stakeholders; and
- c) consider the adoption of a new Recommended Practice in Annex 9 to recommend the adoption by States of an integrated framework for the reporting of, and response to, suspected wildlife trafficking cases and sharing of information.

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¹³ For guidance and case studies, see ACI. *Combating Wildlife Trafficking HANDBOOK* (2021), and ACI. *Best Practice Case Studies from Selected Airports: Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade* (2019).

APPENDIX

Amend Annex 9, Chapter 8, as follows:

8.XX ***Recommended Practice***: Contracting States should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to combat wildlife trafficking including reporting channels, points of contact for exchange of information between airport operators, airline operators and Contracting States, appropriate law enforcement response and sharing of information.

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