



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS TO FIGHT WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council recently approved, on 9 March 2022, Amendment 29 to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* that encourages Member 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.

This paper proposes changes to Assembly Resolution A40-16: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*, to include and reinforce Amendment 29 to Annex 9 and increase awareness and the need for a collaborative approach in this fight to combat wildlife trafficking.

Action: The Assembly is invited to recognize that international air transport stakeholders can contribute to prevent wildlife trafficking, particularly with the support of Member States and law enforcement authorities, and to include, where appropriate in Resolution A41-XX: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*, the text in the Annex hereto.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective <i>Security & Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Resolution A40-16: <i>Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation</i>

¹ English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions presented by ACI and IATA.

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.

1.2 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. If combined with forestry crimes and illegal fisheries, the value can go up to US\$30 and even US\$95 billion per year.

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

1.4 Wildlife trafficking has significant environmental, social and economic consequences, hampering the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 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 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/326 that focuses on illicit wildlife trafficking “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 States have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and many governments are actively confronting this 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 efforts to disrupt wildlife trafficking.

2. INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES

2.1 ACI and IATA are committed to assisting in this fight. Both are signatories of the United for Wildlife (UfW) Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration by The Royal Foundation of The 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 were Members of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership — a key element of the concerted international response to addressing wildlife poaching and associated criminal activities worldwide. Through this Partnership, ACI and IATA have developed a variety of resources available on their web sites for aviation stakeholders to use.

2.3 To help airports meet the UfW Buckingham Palace Declaration commitments, ACI has developed guidance in the form of a handbook and an e-module specifically for airports that includes possible actions, references to relevant materials and case studies. IATA has developed guidance, has amended its protocols and procedures, including the Live Animal Regulations that lowers the risk of exploitation, and has launched a wildlife certification scheme which 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's commitment to the UfW Buckingham Palace Declaration and support to the ROUTES Partnership was reaffirmed in a resolution against wildlife trafficking adopted by the 26th ACI World Annual General Assembly in 2016. Furthermore, the 30th ACI World Annual General Assembly adopted, in 2020, Resolution 3, encouraging airports to support the protection of biodiversity, and thereby also to help avert future pandemics. In June 2016, IATA's 72nd Annual General Meeting adopted the Resolution on Illegal Trade in Wildlife that 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 spillover of emerging infections from animal to human populations and vice versa.

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 that impedes passenger and cargo clearances and contributes to space constraints in arrival terminals, thereby impacting passenger 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 stakeholders' engagement on this serious criminal activity.

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.

3.4 Enforcement agencies should be encouraged to share with aviation stakeholders, establish effective reporting channels, take appropriate actions, and provide feedback to enhance, complement and make appropriate activities more efficient. Likewise, the accelerated automation and digitalization of the aviation sector would further enhance the exchange of information with enforcement agencies.

3.5 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, a new Recommended Practice was added into Annex 9 as part of Amendment 29, which became effective on 18 July 2022 and will become applicable on 18 November 2022. The approved text is as follows:

8.51 **Recommended Practice.**— *Contracting States should ensure that procedures are in place to combat wildlife trafficking, including clear reporting systems and relevant competent authorities' points of contact for airport and airline operators.*

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 This assembly working paper proposes an addition to the proposed revised Resolution, superseding A40-16, to align with the recently adopted Recommended Practice related to wildlife trafficking prevention. Resolution A40-16: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation* should contain a provision to wildlife trafficking prevention to reinforce the latest Annex 9 amendment and increase awareness on the issue and how collaboration is essential in this fight.

4.2 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize that international air transport stakeholders can contribute to prevent wildlife trafficking, particularly with the support of Member States and law enforcement authorities; and
- b) include, where appropriate in Resolution A41-XX: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*, the text in the Annex hereto.

APPENDIX A

**RESOLUTION A41-XX: CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONTINUING ICAO POLICIES
RELATED TO FACILITATION**

Whereas cooperation on wildlife trafficking matters amongst Member States and with the various national, regional, international parties and other stakeholders interested in this area has brought benefits to procedures to combat wildlife trafficking.

Urges Member States to establish between all involved stakeholders an efficient information sharing and collaboration system in the prevention of wildlife trafficking.

— END —