

MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT MEASURES TO FACE THE CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 OUTBREAK

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani today made an announcement about the recent developments in relation to the novel Coronavirus outbreak and the role of the *International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)* with regard to prevention on its spread through international air transport operations.

Mr. Namani explained: “Article 14 of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* refers to Prevention of spread of disease stating that ‘each contracting State agrees to take effective measures to prevent the spread by means of air navigation of cholera, typhus (epidemic), smallpox, yellow fever, plague, and such other communicable diseases as 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 of the application of any existing international convention on this subject to which the contracting States may be parties.’”

Papua New Guinea adhered to the Convention since 15 December 1975, which means it is obliged to comply with ICAO *International Standards*.

Mr. Namani added: “Within the context of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the main role of ICAO as an agency of the United Nations is to support the *World Health Organization (WHO)* mainly by facilitating collaborative arrangements between States and relevant stakeholders.

“Facing the need to stop COVID-19 to continue spreading worldwide, which has led many States to start closing their borders, ICAO reinforced the role of the States referred to aviation security and facilitation. Specifically, one of the provisions of *Annex 9* to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* requires all States subscribed to the Convention to ‘establish a national aviation plan in preparation for an outbreak of a communicable disease posing a public health risk or public health emergency of international concern’.

On 30th January 2020, the WHO Director declared that COVID-19 outbreak constitutes a *Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)*, and on 13th February 2020 ICAO sent a letter to the contracting States like Papua New Guinea, urging them to take action and:

- a) implement relevant provisions of Annex 9 to the Convention;
- b) become a member of the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA);
- c) enhance effectively National FAL Committees by clarifying roles and responsibilities of public health and civil aviation authorities during outbreaks;
- d) implement effective collaboration and coordination strategies with all stakeholders; and
- e) provide financial and in-kind assistance or support to the CAPSCA programme.

To provide awareness on COVID-19, WHO made publicly available an on-line training course intended for public health professionals, incident managers and personnel working for the United Nations, international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which is available at <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>.



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Mr. Namani said: “Facing a Public Health Emergency of International Concern such as the COVID-19 outbreak, requires to keep and constantly improve the level of coordination of all the relevant authorities and stakeholders at national and international levels, which will allow timely and informed decision making. I trust that all relevant PNG agencies and stakeholders are working together to put ICAO and WHO recommendations in place.

From the aviation safety and investigation perspective, the AIC will continue contributing to support all ICAO *Standards and Recommended Practices* to ensure an always safer air transport for all PNG citizens.”