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THE FIRST CAPSCA GLOBAL COORDINATION MEETING GETS UNDERWAY TO TACKLE FUTURE PANDEMICS ON A UNITED FRONT

The Cooperative Arrangement for the Prevention of Spread of Communicable Disease through Air Travel (CAPSCA) met in Singapore on 15 and 16 October for the first CAPSCA Global Coordination meeting of the Regional Aviation Medicine Teams (RAMT). Organised by the ICAO Regional Office in Bangkok and hosted and facilitated by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), the meeting had representatives from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) HQ, Regional Offices in Lima, Mexico, Dakar, Nairobi and Bangkok, as well as representatives of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Airports Council International (ACI) and other regulatory authorities, airlines and airports and public health personnel participating in the event.

The CAPSCA Global initiative represents the inaugural effort for regions and territories around the world to share information and ideas for the development of more robust and harmonised preparedness plans against future public health emergencies.

Dr Anthony Evans, Chief of Aviation Medicine, ICAO, said, "It is fitting that the very first global CAPSCA meeting is held in Singapore. Singapore has been at the forefront of pandemic preparedness planning since the beginning of the CAPSCA project".

Between the SARS, the Avian influenza and the Influenza A (H1N1) threats/pandemics, Singapore has partnered ICAO together with ACI and IATA to develop public health emergency guidelines for ICAO states, airports and airlines.

Yap Ong Heng, Director-General, CAAS, in his opening remarks stated that "The CAPSCA project is the only one of its kind in the world that aims to deal with public health emergencies through air travel. Significantly, the project also brings about close collaboration between the stakeholders in the aviation sector and the public health sector. This is critical to the successful development and implementation of preparedness plans for the aviation sector for any international public health emergency."