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CARRIAGE OF NARCOTIC DRUGS IN FIRST-AID KITS
OF AIRCRAFT ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

The Secretary of the Economic and Social Council has received the following communication from the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization requesting the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda for the resumed twenty-fourth session:

"Montreal 2 December 1957

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated 13 May 1957 ^{1/} in which I dealt with the subject of carriage of opiates and derivatives in first-aid kits on board aircraft on international flights.

Referring to paragraph (ii) of my earlier letter, I am pleased to inform you that although replies have not yet been received from all States which have earlier reported difficulties those in our hand indicate that while some of these States do not permit their national carriers to carry these drugs they do not object to the carriage of strictly controlled and limited quantities of narcotics in first-aid kits as aircraft equipment by foreign carriers entering their territories and that they do not wish to notify differences to the Recommendation of Annex 6 to the ICAO Convention in this respect. This seems already to indicate some clarification of the situation. However, in view of the fact that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is now working on a Single Convention for International Narcotic Control, I would appreciate if the question raised in my previous letter would be brought to the attention of members of the Economic and Social Council which will meet soon to continue its twenty-fourth session.

I have, therefore, the honour to request that an item entitled 'Carriage of narcotic drugs in first-aid kits of aircraft engaged in international flight' be put on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting so as

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^{1/} See annex

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to allow the Council to instruct its Commission on Narcotic Drugs to take under consideration the question raised in my previous letter.

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P.S. Attached is a copy of State Letter AN 5/5 - 614 sent to Contracting States on this subject on 27 May 1957."

(Signed)

C. Ljungberg
Secretary General

"INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Ref.: AN 5/5 - 614

Subject: Carriage of Opiates in
Aircraft First-Aid Kits

Action Required: States to note
conclusions that carriage of opiates
in first-aid kits considered desirable
and to notify any differences regarding
Recommendation 6.2 (a) of Annex 6

Montreal, 27 May 1957

Sir,

I have the honour to invite your attention to my letter (Ref. SR 49/2-339 of 1 August 1956), inviting comments on the carriage of opiates and derivatives in first-aid kits on board aircraft on international flights.

The Air Navigation Commission, at the Eleventh Meeting of its twenty-fourth session on 25 February 1957, noted that a substantial majority of States in their replies have indicated that the carriage of opiates in aircraft first-aid kits as recommended in paragraph 6.2 (a) of Annex 6 is necessary or desirable. It was also noted that up to date no differences or comments have been notified by States regarding this Recommendation. The Commission, in the light of the comments received, concluded that Recommendation 6.2 (a) of Annex 6 is still generally acceptable to States and that there is no reason for its amendment.

It is apparent from the comments of States that the majority do not prohibit the carriage of opiates in reasonable quantity in aircraft first-aid kits on international flights, subject to satisfactory safeguards and regulations by the State of Registry to prevent abuse and in accordance with international narcotic legislation. Some States pointed out that they consider drugs carried in aircraft first-aid kits as being part of the aircraft equipment. This concept is supported by 6.1 of Annex 6. The minority of States, however, have pointed out that under their national laws they cannot permit the carriage of opiates or narcotic drugs in aircraft first-aid kits. This restriction also affects aircraft of other States, prohibiting them from carrying opiates and similar drugs in their first-aid kits over the prohibiting States' territory, although the State of Registry may permit such carriage. It is therefore very desirable that States should notify ICAO of any difference in respect of 6.2 (a) of Annex 6.

The Commission also noted that the issue is complicated by the fact that the international movement of drugs is subject to international narcotic legislation and the detailed provisions in national regulations to that effect differ considerably from State to State.

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The Commission agreed, therefore, to inform States of this situation and of the desirability of allowing foreign aircraft to carry limited quantities of narcotics in first-aid kits under proper safeguards and adequate control. The Commission noted that the problem of carriage of narcotic drugs in medical chests in international traffic was not new, since provisions have been made by ILO, WHO, CIRM (International Radio Medical Centre, Rome) and a number of States concerning supplies in medical chests on board merchant ships, in life boats and rafts. Further the problems of illicit traffic of narcotic drugs by crews of merchant ships and civil aircraft is under consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and its Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The Council, at the Eight Meeting of its Thirtieth Session on 1 April 1957, approved the action taken by the Air Navigation Commission and agreed that there is need for further study of the related medical and legal problems, and decided to invite the Economic and Social Council and the World Health Organization to study these matters, in particular the application of efficient safeguards against abuse and of uniform principles under which opiates or similar drugs might be used and carried in first-aid kits on board on international flights in an effort to promote uniformity under existing laws. The Council, therefore, has instructed the Secretariat to give these problems further consideration and to coordinate and bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council and its Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the World Health Organization any factors affecting international civil aviation.

The Council will maintain a continuous interest in this matter, with particular reference to such aeronautical aspects as safety in flight or of aircraft accidents.

I have, therefore, been instructed by the Council to invite the attention of your Government

- to the fact that Recommendation 6.2 (a) of Annex 6 continues to be satisfactory and that the carriage of opiates and derivatives in aircraft first-aid kits is considered desirable;
- to the implication associated with this Recommendation that aircraft should be permitted to carry the contents of first-aid kits listed in Recommendation 6.2 (a) of Annex 6, on international flights, in reasonable quantities under control according to international narcotic laws and subject to satisfactory safeguards against abuse; and that it is desirable that any differences that might exist in this respect be notified to ICAO.

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(Signed)

C. Ljungberg
Secretary General"

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ANNEX

Communication addressed to the Secretary of the Economic and Social Council
by the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization

"Montreal, 13 May 1957.

Sir,

I have the honour to invite your attention to the fact that the Council of ICAO, at the Eighth Meeting of its Thirtieth Session on 1 April 1957, considered a study submitted by the Air Navigation Commission (C-WP/2372) on the carriage of opiates and derivatives in first-aid kits on board aircraft on international flights. The study was based on replies received from Contracting States which had been invited to comment on difficulties that had been reported by a State on the carriage of opiates in first-aid kits on its aircraft engaged in international flights.

The Council as a result of its study decided:

- (i) that States be informed of the study by the Commission and of its conclusion that the Recommendation in 6.2 a) of Annex 6 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation - Operations, relating to the carriage of analgesics and narcotics, continues to be satisfactory and that the carriage of opiates and derivatives in aircraft first-aid kits is considered desirable;
- (ii) that States be invited to note the implication associated with this Recommendation that carriers should be permitted to carry the contents of first-aid kits listed in Recommendation 6.2 a) of Annex 6, on international flights, in reasonable quantities under control according to international narcotic laws and subject to satisfactory safeguards against abuse; and that it is desirable that any differences that might exist in this respect be notified to ICAO;
- (iii) to invite the Economic and Social Council and the World Health Organization to study the related medical and legal problems, in particular the application of efficient safeguards against abuse and of uniform principles under which opiates or similar drugs might be used and carried in first-aid kits on board aircraft in an effort to promote uniformity under existing laws.

The Council further agreed that such studies should take into account any factors affecting international civil aviation, such as safety of persons on board and relief in the case of emergencies in flight or in aircraft accidents. The Council further considered that the primary responsibility with respect to

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the aeronautical requirements and implications must remain with ICAO, and it has instructed the Secretariat to give these problems further study and to coordinate and bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council and its Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the World Health Organization any factors affecting international civil aviation.

2. A copy of the study by the Air Navigation Commission is attached^{1/} and shows that a substantial majority of States in their replies have indicated that the carriage of opiates in aircraft first-aid kits is necessary or desirable. It is apparent from the replies received that a majority of States do not prohibit the carriage of opiates in reasonable quantity in aircraft first-aid kits on international flights, subject to satisfactory safeguards and regulations being applied by the State of Registry to prevent abuse and in accordance with international narcotic legislation. It has been pointed out that some States do consider drugs carried in aircraft first-aid kits as being part of the aircraft equipment and this concept is supported by 6.1 of Annex 6. A minority of States, however, have pointed out that their national laws do not permit the carriage of opiates or narcotic drugs in aircraft first-aid kits. This restriction also affects aircraft of other States, prohibiting them from carrying these drugs in their first-aid kits over the prohibiting States' territory, although the State of Registry may permit such carriage in compliance with Recommendation 6.2 a) of Annex 6, referred to above.

The Commission noted that the issue is complicated by the fact that the international movement of narcotic drugs is subject to international control, and that the detailed provisions in national regulations to that effect differ considerably from State to State, and that the Economic and Social Council and its Commission on Narcotic Drugs have the problems of illicit traffic of narcotic drugs by crews of merchant ships and civil aircraft under consideration. It further considered that the problem of the carriage of narcotic drugs in medical chests in international traffic is not new, since provisions have been made in a number of States concerning supplies in medical chests on board ships, in life boats and rafts, and the carriage of certain narcotic drugs in medical chests on merchant ships is recommended by the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization and the International Radio Medical Centre (CIRM, Rome).

3. I should therefore, appreciate receiving from you any comments and advice your Organization might be able to provide regarding the carriage of opiates and similar drugs in first-aid kits in international traffic. The establishment of certain internationally acceptable principles and efficient safeguards to prevent abuse such as the mode of prescription and control of drugs, the choice of the most suitable narcotic for international carriage in first-aid kits, the quantity that might be considered reasonable for the carriage in first-aid

^{1/} Available in the Secretariat for reference.

kits, as well as the problems related to the administration of such drugs by crew members in case of emergencies on board and in aircraft accidents, are problems of special interest, and the Economic and Social Council or one of its affiliated bodies may have already studied these problems in relation to other means of transport operating on an international basis. It would be particularly valuable if any such studies in future would keep the special need of aviation in mind and I will be pleased to provide you with any additional information related to the specific aeronautical aspects involved.

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(Signed) C. Ljungberg
Secretary General"
