

## 1. Opening and thank you remarks

Thank you, Mohamed.

Good morning to all, *bonjour á tous et á toutes*.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, excellences, distinguished delegates and guests, it is my pleasure and honour to address the 17<sup>th</sup> Symposium and Exhibition on ICAO Traveller Identification Programme. It is truly great to see all of you here in the Assembly Hall in a face-to-face setting.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the ICAO Secretariat team for delivering the first in-person symposium since 2019 and for extending me the invitation to speak. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Facilitation Section team at ICAO for their support, as well as to the many vendors and exhibitors, and all those who worked tirelessly to make this great event happen.

There is no doubt that our world has changed significantly since the onset of the pandemic, creating new challenges for civil aviation, particularly for facilitation measures. Evolving challenges from the restart of international air travel and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 to long wait-times at airports to baggage chaos. If you have travelled this summer, you may have experienced some of these challenges yourself, perhaps your luggage never arrived at your destination.

To address these new challenges, events like this symposium, which bring together a variety of stakeholders, are of great importance.

Today, I am pleased to talk about the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP), ICAO's and Japan's COVID-19 initiatives in connection with facilitation measures, and the important role of technology in the recovery of air travel.

## 2. TRIP Strategy and Elements

The ICAO TRIP Strategy serves as a global framework for traveller identification management not only for Member States but also for numerous international, regional and industry partners.

The ICAO TRIP Strategy is recognized as a key pillar of Aviation Security and Facilitation, one of the five ICAO Strategic Objectives.

The regulatory framework behind the TRIP Strategy is Annex 9 - Facilitation. The revised 2021 ICAO TRIP roadmap incorporates new and revised Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to the ICAO TRIP Strategy with the objective to guide Member States in their efforts to implement this strategy and comply with the related Annex 9 SARPs.

The TRIP Strategy provides significant opportunity for future enhancements in both aviation security and facilitation by bringing together the elements of holistic identification management into an integrated results-oriented framework.

### 3. COVID-19 and Facilitation

Excellences, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly disrupted global air transport.

ICAO has taken various actions in response to the pandemic.

In May 2020, the Council of ICAO decided to establish the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART). CART provided practical, aligned guidance to governments and industry operators in order to restart the international air transport sector and recover from the impacts of COVID-19 on a coordinated global basis.

In October 2021, ICAO conducted the High-level Conference on COVID-19. The Conference focused mainly on safety and facilitation objectives. The key outcome of this event was its Ministerial Declaration, which conveyed a strong political message to the international community advocating actions to support the recovery of the aviation industry, including facilitation-related priorities such as formalizing new commitments on border risk management and vaccination approaches, and the facilitation of passenger flows.

Let me now outline Japan's main initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support and enhance facilitation measures.

The digitalization of certificates is being developed in various countries and international organizations. Japan has adopted the ICAO Visible Digital Seal for non-constrained environments (VDS-NC) specification for vaccination certificates. The European Union, for instance, has implemented the EU Digital COVID Certificate. In this connection, achieving global interoperability among different digital health certificates is of great importance to support international travel and aviation recovery.

Japan has also introduced a new boarding procedure, "Face Express", at both Narita and Haneda International Airports. Face Express allows passengers to register their facial image and pass through baggage check-in, security checkpoints, and boarding gates with a "facial pass" without having to present their boarding pass or passport – this is the Japanese version of IATA's One ID. This face recognition technology will improve passengers' experience and enhance contactless travel as a measure against the spread of infectious diseases.

Similarly, to ensure greater facilitation, automated gates have become more available in major international airports. In addition to being seamless and contactless, they help simplify immigration procedures by exempting immigration stamps and saving visa pages, in line with ICAO's specification that no additional pages should be added to the Machine Readable Passport.

### 4. Concluding remarks

Excellences, the pandemic has demonstrated the important role that technology can play in improving traveller identification. More than ever, it has showed the need to adopt seamless and contactless measures, as well as the importance of promoting partnerships and cooperation among international organizations, government and industry.

Facilitation has been playing a critical role in the response, restart, recovery and resilience of air transport as the aviation sector adapts to new challenges.

In this connection, we look forward to very interesting presentations and exchange of views in this year's symposium *Seamless and Contactless: Sharing Data to Accelerate the Recovery*.

In addition, facilitation activities are linked to 6 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and at ICAO we must ensure that no country is left behind.

I wish to highlight that 2024 will be a special year for ICAO Facilitation as it will mark the 75-year anniversary of Annex 9.

Japan will continue to actively contribute to the facilitation efforts of ICAO.

In closing, I would like to wish all distinguished delegates a productive 17<sup>th</sup> Symposium and a great week ahead here in Montreal.

Thank you.