

Mr Salvatore Sciacchitano - President of the ICAO Council
Ambassador Isao Fukushima - Representative of Japan on the ICAO Council
Mr Mohamed Rahma - Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO

Friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the 17th ICAO Traveller Identification Programme Symposium and Exhibition. It is a great pleasure and honour to be in your midst and addressing you as the acting Chair of the ICAO Facilitation Panel.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of civil aviation facilitation and border health-related issues with air travel and the movement of air cargo were placed under the spotlight as countries closed their borders to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Two and a half years later, many countries have lifted, eased or are in the midst of easing restrictions, and we are starting to see a renewed interest in air travel with pent up demand from not being able to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With recovery, we have seen that it has become even more crucial to share, digitalise and automate traveller credential data, and especially so when it comes to integrating public health credentials of travellers so that a travellers' journey continues to be efficient and seamless. This is where the ICAO Digital Travel Credential and Digital Travel Authorisation aim to provide solutions and pathways towards the standardisation and easily verified notification of a travellers' identity.

Very soon, from 27 September to 7 October 2022, we will see the 41st ICAO Assembly taking place here in Montreal. Already, we see a great number of working papers dealing with a host of facilitation issues, amongst the many others. All of these will have implications for Annex 9, and the ICAO Facilitation Panel will surely have its work cut out for it. But, with your strong and continued support, I am sure we will be able to deal with the many facilitation issues at hand and move the needle so that these issues may be addressed satisfactorily.

Until we see each other at the ICAO Facilitation Panel in December 2023, I wish everyone a productive TRIP symposium here in Montreal, and thank you.