



## 2021 TRIP Symposium explores role of seamless and contactless travel in air transport recovery

For immediate release

**Montréal, 26 May 2021** – Enhancing efficiencies at border crossings and meeting travellers' post-pandemic expectations for a secure and healthy travel experience will be key to the recovery of the global aviation sector, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu told participants to the 16th ICAO Traveller Identification Programme Symposium yesterday.

Gathered to explore the TRIP2021 theme of *Game Changing Technologies Driving Seamless Border Management*, the innovators and passenger facilitation experts present explored solutions enabling stronger synergies between national identity management, travel documents, border control, the clearance of aircraft, and all aspects of baggage and cargo screening.

“The [ICAO TRIP strategy](#) provides a foundation from which to assure these objectives,” Dr. Liu emphasized in her opening remarks.

Participants learned that there is still wide variation in the levels of pandemic impact among ICAO's Member States, and very low levels of public health risk tolerance globally, factors which are delaying a full global recovery despite improvements in some regions.

Dr. Liu noted that a key current priority is to ensure travel and tourism stakeholders worldwide are fully prepared for vaccine rollouts, and stressed that reliable certification of testing and vaccination status will likely be key to near-term recovery progress.

“A possible solution for authenticating these documents will be the Visible Digital Seal (VDS), a technology that builds on ICAO's expertise in specifications for international travel documents and ePassports in particular.”

The ICAO VDS is a cost-effective and easy-to-deploy digitally signed barcode that can be carried on a smartphone or printed on paper. By leveraging existing interoperability specifications already adopted by countries through ICAO, it holds the potential to assure more rapid implementation of health certificates which are internationally secure and verifiable.

The ICAO Secretary General highlighted the vital importance in this context of effective partnerships and coordination between air transport and public health decision-makers, and expressed her appreciation of “the longstanding and very effective levels of collaboration between ICAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), most recently toward the WHO Smart Vaccination Certificate.”

Commenting on how the ICAO TRIP strategy includes elements relating to Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) and border control and management, Dr. Liu pointed to the high security performance of contemporary travel documents, including the more than one billion ePassports now in global circulation.

She also noted that the established trust framework for eMRTDs, supported by the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), plays an important part in achieving this globally secure system, in addition to the integrity of the underlying identity management systems.

“These objectives require extensive and close coordination among many government entities and other stakeholders, underscoring the importance of national air transport facilitation programmes,” she said. “Facilitation programmes also play a vital role in the establishment of effective Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data systems, which are now required in every ICAO Member State.”

Concluding her remarks, the Secretary General highlighted how the ICAO TRIP Strategy’s contributions to global security and counter-terrorism priorities are well recognized, and that ICAO is a core partner of the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (UNCTTP) which promotes the implementation of passenger data systems throughout the world.

Dr. Liu appreciated the promising outcomes of facial recognition and other accelerating biometric initiatives globally, including with respect to the ICAO-developed Digital Travel Credential (DTC) solution that will allow travellers to present a digital representation of their travel document.



## Resources for Editors

[ICAO's COVID-19 Portal](#)  
[ICAO's TRIP Strategy](#)

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially-recognized air transport stakeholders.

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