



STATEMENT BY DELEGATION

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON COVID-19

12 – 22 October 2021

MINISTERIAL PLENARY

STATEMENT BY THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

(Presented by the Brazilian Minister of Infrastructure, Tarcísio Gomes de Freitas)

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I would like to greet all the participants in this event of utmost importance to international civil aviation. It is an honor to be here with the world's highest civil aviation representatives and contribute to enriching this debate in support of the recovery and restart of the aviation sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out unprecedented challenges for the air-transport sector, especially for international operations. The airline sector is one of the hardest hit by the pandemic, mainly due to the worldwide adoption of legitimate border measures to protect public health.

There are several different implications originating from the international civil aviation paralysis, be they economic, social, and psychological. As we know, the aviation sector not only supports significant world economic activities, generating wealth and jobs, but it is also the main responsible for international connectivity, which enables social and cultural interaction and integration among peoples. The aviation sector is also fundamental to the transport of essential goods, such as vaccines.

Restoring such connectivity, in a safe, responsible, and sustainable way must be our top priority. Therefore, this conference is more than timely.

In this effort to restart and recover international aviation connectivity, close collaboration among all stakeholders through efforts coordinated by States will be paramount. Collaboration, coordination, and responsibility are keywords for the recovery of air operations. We must ensure their resumption occurs not only swiftly but also in a safe, sustainable, and efficient manner.

From the Brazilian perspective, two major challenges must be addressed at this moment by the international community in this High-level Conference on COVID-19 organized by the International Civil Aviation Organization – ICAO.

First and foremost, it is necessary to recognize that, albeit legitimate, the measures adopted to contain the COVID-19 outbreak have restricted the movement of people. The immediate consequence was a drastic plunge in international air transport numbers. We need to face this situation in order to foster the sector's recovery.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, airlines and airports have been working with sanitary authorities and have fully internalized the sanitary protocols needed to safely restart international operations. In this regard, we believe that the reopening of borders between countries should be based on health measures that consider coherent criteria for efficient risk management and do not impose unnecessary restrictions.

As vaccination progresses around the world, one can observe the efforts of many countries to advance the safe recovery of air operations. Vaccination certification could be a great ally in these efforts, as long as it is properly used.

We understand that vaccination certificates must not become a new condition for international travel, but they should rather be a factor for more relaxed travel rules. In the spirit of inclusion and non-discrimination, which must also guide the efforts of the airline sector's recovery, vaccination cannot be a pre-requisite for international travel. Unvaccinated people must maintain their right of movement, including by air travel, even though more rigorous cross-border health measures can be applied to them, as long as they are reasonable, proportionate, and scientifically based.

Furthermore, we have noticed that discriminatory measures have been adopted against the movement of people based on the acceptance of specific vaccine manufacturers. There is solid scientific evidence supporting the homologation of different types of vaccines authorized in different countries. The recovery of the airline sector demands the adoption of science-based measures guided by the principles of equity, science and non-discrimination. We understand that all World Health Organization (WHO)-recognized vaccines or those approved by the sanitary authority of the passenger's country of origin should be considered, to facilitate the process of gradual relaxation of cross-border health measures, such as quarantine and testing. Discriminatory policies must be avoided, as they can jeopardize international collaboration, a fundamental value in the current context.

Brazil established the COVID-19 National Vaccination Certificate. The certificate can be issued by those who are fully vaccinated in Brazil. This document contains relevant, legitimate, safe, trustworthy, and easily verifiable information about the vaccine received by its holder. As it is well known, the vaccines used in Brazil were approved by a rigorous analysis process carried out by our National Health Surveillance Agency - ANVISA. In this sense, Brazil is open to having a dialogue with any country willing to recognize our vaccination certificate, facilitating thus the movement of people.

In the process of building up a global solution for resuming international air transport, the harmonization and interoperability of any digital solution adopted as proof of testing or vaccination by passengers will be needed. This is a fundamental policy for the facilitation of air transport and efficient proof of testing and vaccination. In this regard, we congratulate ICAO's efforts to encourage the harmonization and interoperability of protocols regarding testing and vaccination proofs.

The second great challenge that must be addressed in this Conference is the basis under which our sector's recovery will take place. Air transport supports economic activities, generates jobs and wealth, promotes tourism and business. Hence, Brazil reaffirms its commitment to the sustainable, efficient, and competitive development of aviation, and urges other States to work together for an economic recovery based on free competition, open markets, and non-discrimination. Those principles are enshrined in the Chicago Convention, and, in moments of crisis, it becomes even more important to recognize and reaffirm them. We cannot accept any setback.

We must recognize that we are experiencing challenging times, which demand creative solutions and, above all, responsibility, coordination, and collaboration. The Brazilian Government maintains its willingness to strengthen international dialogue and solidarity, including in the so vital aviation sector.

We believe that, from this conference on, we will achieve great results that will strengthen the world's aviation and, therefore, will have positive impacts on the generation of jobs, wealth, tourism, and above all, interconnectivity among peoples.

I wish you all a great High-level Conference. Thank you very much!

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