



**Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil
Aviation of Fiji, Honorable Viliame Gavoka**

High-Level Ministerial Segment of the ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025

Doha, Qatar | 17 April 2025

H.E. Minister of Transport of Qatar,

The Acting President of the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority

Your Excellencies,

The President of the ICAO Council,

The Secretary General of ICAO,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for Fiji to participate in this Ministerial segment of the ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025. I convey warm greetings from the Government and people of Fiji and express our sincere appreciation to the State of Qatar and ICAO for convening this critical gathering under the theme "*Facilitating the Future of Air Transport: Collaboration, Efficiency, Inclusivity.*"

Fiji fully supports the Doha Declaration and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the effective implementation of Annex 9 — Facilitation to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. In a globally interconnected world, facilitation is not a luxury, it is a necessity. It enables safe, secure, and seamless travel, drives tourism, strengthens connectivity, and supports economic recovery and resilience.

Fiji, an island nation in the South Pacific, is heavily reliant on tourism, which contributes approximately 40% to our GDP. This deep economic dependence on tourism makes aviation an essential pillar of national development and facilitation critical to achieving this objective.

Fiji serves as a vital hub for air connectivity in the Pacific, linking island nations with major international destinations. With Nadi International Airport as its primary gateway, Fiji facilitates both passenger and cargo movement, supporting regional development and economic resilience. To this end, Fiji has made significant strides in strengthening its National Air Transport Facilitation Programme and revitalizing its National Air Transport Facilitation Committee to ensure strong coordination between aviation, immigration, customs, health, and security agencies. Fiji is also developing a Facilitation legislation.

As host of the ICAO Pacific Liaison Office, the country plays a central role in promoting safe, secure, and sustainable aviation across the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), directly

contributing to ICAO's global objectives. We also acknowledge that ICAO is implementing a program with stretched resources and we welcome any future commitments from States on assistance in this regard.

In terms of a collective effort to aviation as a Regional bloc, last month Fiji hosted the Third Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting bringing together eighteen Pacific States to strengthen regional partnerships for a safe, secure, and sustainable aviation future.

We commend ICAO's leadership in developing robust global frameworks like the Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy and the Public Key Directory (PKD), and support efforts to enhance digital identity, biometric recognition, and the seamless processing of travellers. These are vital tools to enhance facilitation while upholding security and integrity. We must also ensure that in our quest for digitalization moving forward, small island developing States are not left behind.

Fiji is also firmly committed to addressing human trafficking and enhancing passenger data systems. We are progressing work on API and PNR implementation and ensuring our border agencies are equipped with the necessary protocols and training. Equally, we recognize the importance of accessible air transport for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility and are working with our airport operators to improve inclusive services throughout the passenger journey.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals and ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, Fiji emphasizes the importance of capacity building and regional cooperation, especially for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

We encourage ICAO and development partners to support tailored assistance programmes that enable all States to implement Annex 9 provisions effectively.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us of the urgent need for resilient and agile systems that can respond to public health emergencies. Fiji is committed to strengthening aviation health protocols and ensuring continuity of air services even in times of crisis.

Excellencies,

Let us seize this moment, to reaffirm our collective commitment to smarter facilitation, to a harmonised and inclusive future of aviation, and to building a system where no country and no passenger is left behind.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.