

SAMOA COUNTRY STATEMENT

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Facilitation Conference

Doha, State of Qatar | 2025

Honorable Minister of Transport of the State of Qatar,

Honorable Fellow Ministers,

The Acting President of the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority,

Mr. President of the Council of ICAO

Mr. Secretary General of ICAO

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa and warm greetings from the Independent State of Samoa.

At the outset, allow me to convey Samoa's appreciation to the Government of the State of Qatar and the International Civil Aviation Organization for the excellent hosting of this important Facilitation Conference.

Excellencies,

In December 2019, Samoa declared a State of Emergency as a deadly measles epidemic swept through our nation, claiming over 80 lives — most of them children — and affecting more than 3,000 people, over 3% of our population. The outbreak, traced to an infected air traveler, led to the immediate closure of our borders.

Though restrictions eased in January 2020, just two months later, on 18 March, Samoa again sealed its borders in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Having learned from the measles crisis, Samoa was among the first nations to fully close its borders, a decision that remained in place until 1 August 2022, after achieving our national COVID-19 vaccination target. This nearly three-year isolation came at a significant cost to our economy and the wellbeing of our people.

In this connection, Samoa reaffirms its strong support for ICAO's work in promoting safe, secure, and efficient air transport. Appreciating and commending the hard work and developments ICAO has addressed and assisted

by way of providing Guidance and continuous support in ensuring that Facilitation of International Air Transportation continues to flow smoothly, even in the event of the different crisis and challenges as shared through the sessions of the last few days.

As a Small Island Developing State, aviation is essential to our national resilience — connecting us to the world, sustaining tourism and trade, and ensuring vital health and humanitarian services.

Earlier this year, Samoa joined our regional partners for the 3rd **Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM)**. That meeting was a landmark occasion for our region, producing a new **Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy 2024–2030**. Among its priorities are safety, security, connectivity, and **facilitation** — issues that directly align with the themes of this conference.

Through the RAMM, Pacific States, to include Samoa, reaffirmed the critical role of regional coordination in advancing aviation priorities — including safety, connectivity, resilience and public health preparedness, and strengthened institutional cooperation through our Pacific Aviation Safety Office.

Through the RAMM platform and its initial set of agreed short-term priorities, Pacific States have laid important groundwork for deeper collaboration in areas such as border systems, facilitation, and harmonised approaches to managing air connectivity.

In this spirit, Samoa wishes to highlight four key areas:

1. Capacity Building for Pacific SIDS:

We call for continued technical assistance and training to support our efforts in implementing ICAO facilitation standards.

2. Strengthened Public Health Preparedness:

The pandemic taught us valuable lessons, and Samoa supports efforts to improve public health management at borders, including through ICAO's CAPSCA programme.

3. Digital, Contactless Passenger Processing:

Samoa endorses ICAO's initiatives in digital travel credentials, API, and PNR systems, and seeks to align with a progressive regional focus on digital innovation and inclusive connectivity endorsed through RAMM3. We welcome support for Pacific States to adopt these technologies.

4. Sustainable Air Connectivity:

As a remote island nation, we echo the RAMM's call for global partnerships that protect and strengthen essential air services in our region.

Samoa welcomes ICAO's continued support for regional cooperation and the strengthening of our Pacific voice in global forums. We sincerely appreciate the establishment of the ICAO Pacific Liaison Office in Nadi, Fiji — a vital step that connects our PSIDS communities and reaffirms the 'No Country Left Behind' principle, ensuring our Pacific Small Island Developing States remain included and engaged in the global aviation community."

In reciprocation, The RAMM3 outcomes reaffirm our collective pursuit of harmonised regulatory systems and a regional approach to air connectivity and safety, with the inclusion of prioritization of **Facilitation aspects of International Air Transportation**.

Samoa remains committed to working with ICAO and all Member States to build a secure, resilient, and inclusive global aviation system, and supports the DOHA Declaration, acknowledging the importance of:

- Global Facilitation Governance;
- Facilitating the Passenger Journey and Protective Rights;
- Data, Innovation and Skills; and
- Most importantly, with the global effects of COVID-19, the importance of inclusion of Health.

We thank ICAO for its leadership and reaffirm our support for the outcomes of this conference.

Fa'afetai tele lava, and Shukran.

Soifua.