

Solomon Islands Government

Ministerial Statement at the Facilitation Conference, Doha, 17 April 2025

His Excellency, Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Thani, Minister of Transport, Qatar

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers

President of ICAO Council,

Secretary General of ICAO,

Industry representatives

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols Observed

Let me first, acknowledge the Government of QATAR for the excellent organisation of logistics and support rendered towards my delegation to ensure we enjoy seamless travel to your beautiful country.

Let me also appreciate the Government of Qatar and ICAO for the warm invitation extended to the Government of Solomon Islands to participate at this auspicious Conference on facilitation.

Context

Ladies and gentlemen, as an ICAO member state, Solomon Islands is deeply committed to discharge its role under the Convention to ensure the safety, security and regularity of the global air navigation system.

Therefore, the Government is driving policies to create an enabling environment for aviation to flourish and contribute to the economic development of SI, in a safe, integrated, sustainable and resilient manner.

As a Pacific Small Island Developing State with approximately 1000 islands, compounded by a larger geographical spread, civil aviation plays a critical role in the connectivity and accessibility for air travel, tourism, business and trade to grow.

Hence, we are encouraged by theme of this conference (Facilitating the future of air transport: collaboration, efficiency, inclusivity : Streamlining Travel, Connecting Communities) as it resonates well with our development focus.

1.0 State arrangements for facilitation - National Air Transport Facilitation Committee

Ladies and gentlemen, Solomon Islands in its commitment to ICAO Facilitation Standards of Annex 9, has made progress in the following areas.

- Established the National Air Transport Facilitation Programme, that governs facilitation initiatives of air transport within the state. The national programme comes under the oversight of my Ministry, Communication and Aviation.
- As part of the government reforms in aviation, we are making progress to amend the primary legislation to include requirements for the NATFP within the legislation.

2.0 Function of the NATFP

The National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP), based on the ten Articles (10, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 29, 35, 37 and 38) of the Chicago Convention demonstrates Solomon Islands commitment to implementing and facilitating maximum efficiency in border-crossing formalities with respect to international aircraft operators conducting services to Solomon Islands in such a seamless manner to prevent delays to passengers, crew and cargo.

Excellencies, while committed to facilitating efficient clearance for arriving and departing aircraft, Solomon Islands is committed to maintain high levels of security, effective law enforcement and proficient customer services.

The NATFP seeks to harmonise the interests of all aircraft operators, government stakeholders, commercial air transport users and airports to foster the growth of a safe, secure, integrated, resilient, inclusive and viable air transport industry.

3.0 The role of facilitation during COVID-19 – Our Experience

As we have all experienced, the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore, the value of facilitation, to ensure a Pacific Small Island Developing State like

Solomon Islands operational through our sole gateway, Honiara International Airport.

Whilst the Executive took control of the leadership and direction, the level of collaboration, coordination and partnership of all aviation stake holders was critical for the facilitation of passengers and essential goods via air.

We have learnt that when it comes to successful facilitation of air transport initiatives, the whole of government approach as well as industry need each other to better coordinate, communicate and collaborate.

4.0 Support to ICAO facilitation programmes

Ladies and gentlemen, Solomon Islands is fully committed to implementing ICAO standards in facilitation. We continue to raise our safety oversight efforts to ensure Annex 9 requirements are fully implemented by airlines, airports and aviation security providers as well as government agencies. Importantly, we look forward to ICAO's assessment of our facilitation programmes during ICAO USAP Audit in 2026.

Conclusion

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, Solomon Island government fully support the Doha Declaration on facilitation. The elements outlined within the declaration are fundamental to foster a sustainable, integrated and resilient global aviation system. Nationally, these milestones are critical for the growth and development of civil aviation in Solomon Islands.

Excellencies, Solomon Islands applauds and deeply appreciates the support and commitment of ICAO to progressively implement the recommendation of the PSIDS study. The establishment of a Pacific Liaison Office in Fiji in August 2024 was a fine demonstration of facilitation and collaboration. Solomon Islands will continue to collaborate and support ICAO's efforts in the Pacific through this Office.

Finally, Solomon Islands reaffirm our solemn commitment to support ICAO's ongoing vision and programmes towards achieving a safe global aviation system.