

Statement by the Honourable Simon Kofe,
Minister for Transport, Energy, Communication and Innovation
Government of Tuvalu
at the
High Level Ministerial Segment of the FALC 2025

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring warm greetings from Tuvalu, one of the smallest and most remote island nations in the world. It is a great honour to be here today, and I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Qatar for the gracious invitation and hospitality extended to us at this important ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025.

The theme for this year's conference, "Facilitating the Future of Air Transport: Collaboration, Efficiency, Inclusivity," resonates deeply with us in Tuvalu. As a nation made up of nine islands scattered across the vast Pacific Ocean, the ability to streamline travel and connect our communities is not just a matter of convenience—it is a matter of national resilience, economic survival, and social cohesion.

Tuvalu's geographic isolation and limited economic scale underscore the urgent need for international aviation frameworks to consider the special needs of Small Island Developing States. We commend ICAO for creating a space to have these vital conversations and highlight that while connectivity remains one of our highest priorities, we also reaffirm our commitment to the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan. Safety must always be the foundation upon which we build greater access and mobility.

Though small in size, Tuvalu holds a bold and optimistic vision for the future of civil aviation. We are determined to expand our aviation sector to better serve our people—connecting families, enabling trade, and unlocking opportunity. However, we recognize that we cannot do this alone. We look to partners such as ICAO for support in strengthening institutional and human capacity, and ensuring that we meet and uphold international aviation safety and security standards.

As a sovereign state, Tuvalu also seeks greater access to our own international airspace data and management information. In the pursuit of effective planning and oversight, it is essential that we are empowered with the tools and data necessary to manage our airspace with sovereignty and confidence.

Domestically, we are also undertaking reforms to strengthen the regulation and operational management of our airports. In parallel, Tuvalu is working to enhance its border security and identity management systems through our Passport Uplift project, with the generous support of Australia. This work is critical for ensuring that

Tuvalu aligns fully with ICAO's principles of facilitation, security, and integrity in cross-border travel.

We also strongly advocate for the strengthening of sub-regional cooperation in the Pacific. Improved connectivity between neighbouring island states is essential. We call upon our fellow small nations to collaborate with us on a task force level and welcome technical and financial support from development partners and aviation organizations to advance this goal.

In closing, Tuvalu stands ready to work hand in hand with ICAO and all its Member States to ensure that the future of air transport is not only collaborative, efficient, and inclusive—but also safe, equitable, and accessible to even the smallest and most isolated among us.

Fakafetai lasi. Thank you very much.