

IATA calls for simplification of Covid-19 travel rules

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Montreal : The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has called on governments to adopt "simple, predictable and practical" measures to safely facilitate the ramping-up of international travel as borders re-open.

Specifically, the trade body urged governments to focus on simplified health protocols, digital solutions to process health credentials and Covid-19 measures proportionate to risk levels.

The vision to address the complexity is outlined in the newly released policy paper.

"As governments are establishing processes to re-open borders, in line with what they agreed in the ministerial declaration of the ICAO High Level Conference of Covid-19, the blueprint will help them with good practices and practical considerations.

"Over the next months we need to move from individual border openings to the restoration of a global air transport network that can reconnect communities and facilitate economic recovery," said Conrad Clifford, IATA deputy director general.

The document aims to facilitate the efficient ramping-up of global connectivity.

"We must have processes in place to safely and efficiently manage the ramping-up of international travel as borders re-open.

"With over 18 months of pandemic operational experience and traveller feedback we know that a laser-focus on simplicity, predictability and practicality is essential.

"That is not the reality today.

"Over 100,000 Covid-19 related measures have been implemented by governments worldwide.

"This complexity is a barrier to global mobility that is exacerbated by the inconsistencies these measures have created among states," said Clifford.

Key recommendations include the removal of all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine.

The management of travel health credentials (vaccination or testing certificates) should also be handled digitally, IATA argued, enabling travellers to complete the process in advance so that they can arrive at the airport ready-to-travel.

This will facilitate automated check-in processes, reducing airport queuing and wait-times.

"Travel is important - pre-pandemic some 88 million livelihoods were directly connected to aviation.

"And the inability to travel freely by air has impacted the quality of life for billions of people.

"We know that travellers feel confident with the implementation of the Covid-19 safety measures.

"But they have clearly told us that the current travel experience needs to improve with better information, simpler processing and digital solutions," concluded Clifford.