

Travel momentum builds as restrictions are lifted : IATA

A Monitor Report

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Geneva : The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data showing growing momentum in the recovery of air travel as restrictions are lifted.

IATA reported a sharp 11-percentage point increase for international tickets sold in recent weeks (in proportion to 2019 sales).

In the period around February 8 (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 49 per cent of the same period in 2019.

In the period around January 25 (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 38 per cent of the same period in 2019.

The 11-percentage point improvement between the January and February periods is the fastest such increase for any two-week period since the crisis began.

Progressive alleviation of Covid-19 measures

The jump in ticket sales comes as more governments announce a relaxation of Covid-19 border restrictions. An IATA survey of travel restrictions for the world's top 50 air travel markets (comprising 92 per cent of global demand in 2019 as measured by revenue passenger kilometers) revealed the growing access available to vaccinated travelers.

18 markets (comprising about 20 per cent of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine or pre-departure testing requirements.

28 markets are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine requirements (including the 18 markets noted above). This comprises about 50 per cent of 2019 demand.

37 markets (comprising about 60 per cent of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers under varying conditions (18 having no restrictions, others requiring testing or quarantine or both).

These numbers reflect a spate of relaxations announced around the world, including in Australia, France, the Philippines, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden among them.

"Momentum toward normalising traffic is growing. Vaccinated travelers have the potential to travel much more extensively with fewer hassles than even a few weeks ago. This is giving growing numbers of travelers the confidence to buy tickets. And that is good news! Now we need to further accelerate the removal of travel restrictions. While recent progress is impressive, the world remains far from 2019 levels of connectivity. Thirteen of the top 50 travel markets still do not provide easy access to all vaccinated travelers. That includes major economies like China, Japan, Russia, Indonesia, and Italy," said Willie Walsh, Director General, IATA.

IATA continues to call for: removing all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine, enabling quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travellers with a negative pre-departure antigen test result, removing travel bans, and, accelerating the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travelers pose no greater risk for Covid-19 spread than already exists in the general population.