

Abuja, Nigeria, June 27 (Infosplusgabon) – Passengers travelling abroad through Nigeria's airport terminals are required to arrive five hours before departure in order to undergo Coronavirus (COVID-19) protocols, Minister of Aviation, Senator Hadi Sirika announced on Saturday in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos.

In addition, domestic travellers would need to arrive three hours before departure for the same processing.

Sirika spoke at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos when he led other members of Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 to inspect facilities put in place at the airport ahead of its reopening.

The minister said that the new measure being put in place is to reduce sources of contamination of the virus at the airports which were closed March 23.

Announcing some of the measures introduced for the reopening of the country's airports, Sirika said that physical distancing had been established at various points of the airport, adding that this is done by marking the floors at the airports.

He said that physical distancing would now be required to be maintained right from the point of getting down from the vehicle that conveyed one to the airport.

“We will provide polythene bags where passengers put all their things for protocol and we will ensure there is a minimal contact by the person screening you,” Sirika said.

The minister said that the number of seats at the departure lounge of the MMIA had been reduced to 50 from 500 in order to maintain social distancing.

He further said that passengers must comply strictly to the wearing of face masks before entering the airports while aviation authorities would ensure provision of alcohol based sanitiser at the airports.

The minister added that toilets at the airports were also COVID-19 compliant, stressing that everything is being done to minimise physical contact.

Sirika said that pilots, engineers, traffic controllers and catering staff, among others, at the airports were now certified and licensed to carry out certain activities only when they have the valid clearance.

He said that the aircraft must be airworthy with full compliance to COVID-19 protocols as airports are set to be reopened.

He said that there would be palliatives for operators of airlines because they had lost a lot.

Dr Sani Aliyu, the PTF Coordinator, expressed satisfaction over full compliance with COVID-19 protocols at the airport.

He said it showed that the airport was ready for reopening with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols.

Also speaking, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, said members of PTF were at the Murtala International Airport to inform Nigerians on the new protocols and processes guiding the reopening of airports.

Other members of the PTF who were in Lagos to observe adherence to COVID-19 protocols were Minister of State for Health, Sen. Olorunibe Mamora; and Minister of State for Education, Mr Emeka Nwajiuba.

Meanwhile, the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, on Saturday re-opened for business with the observance of safety protocols following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Journalists covering the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 were led on a dry run test from Lagos to Abuja, to witness firsthand, reopening of the aviation sector.

The airport also complied with strict safety measures, aimed at curtailing the spread of the virus.

Provisions were made for hand wash and alcohol-based sanitizers, temperature checks, as well as strict compliance to the social distancing order of about one metre.

The seats, which were usually crowded, have been re-arranged in compliance with the social distancing rule.

Also, instructions to further guide passengers, such as “do not use this seat,” “keep your distance,” were placed on the seats.

Two newly acquired machines for identifying passengers were also showcased.

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