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In reply please  
refer to:

Your reference:

Mr Umberto de Pretto  
Secretary-General  
International Road Transport Union (IRU)  
La Voie-Creuse 16  
1211 Genève

26 May 2021

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 12 May 2021 regarding the International Road Transport Union (IRU) emergency call for action on COVID-19 vaccinations for professional drivers.

I am grateful for the essential role that the IRU, and the 3.5 million transport operating companies represented by your organization, have played and continue to play during this pandemic. Please be assured that the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes and deeply appreciates the work of the road transport industry and their professional drivers in ensuring the continuous transportation of medical and humanitarian supplies and equipment, as well as food and other essential items, despite the challenges posed by restrictions to mobility worldwide.

It is in the collective interest of all countries across the globe that we reduce transmission and succeed in the control of the spread of this virus with all the tools that we have at our disposal so that societies and economies, including the transportation sector, can continue operating safely. Vaccination is one such powerful tool.

With the support of our Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE), WHO has published a Values framework for the allocation and prioritization of COVID-19 vaccination and a Roadmap for prioritizing uses of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of limited supply, which provides a global guidance on the allocation of COVID-19 vaccines between countries, as well as, within countries, across population groups.

I am pleased to inform you that transportation workers were identified as essential workers outside the health sector for prioritization by the SAGE group in these two landmark documents, which WHO uses to advise health authorities for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines globally.

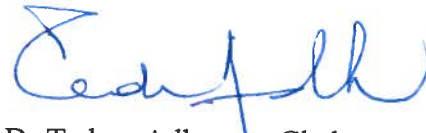
In relation to your request for a digital vaccination certificate, WHO launched in December 2020 an initiative under the name of the Smart Vaccination Certificate, bringing together a multidisciplinary group of experts to ensure that digital vaccination certificates are consistent, interoperable, aligned with expected national and international scenarios of use, and follow a paper-first approach.

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The work of this initiative is undergoing, and my teams are at your disposal to provide any further technical details in this regard. Noting that, following the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IHR Emergency Committee on COVID-19 (19 April 2021), at present, national authorities and conveyance operators should not introduce requirements of proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travel as a condition of entry, given the limited (although growing) evidence about the performance of vaccines in reducing transmission and the persistent inequity in the global vaccine distribution.

Do not hesitate to continue bringing to my attention the voices of all those in the road transport sector fighting on the front lines to keep the economies of the world open and societies safely connected during this pandemic. I reassure you that you can count on WHO's continued engagement in endeavours aimed at facilitating a safe return to operations.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director-General