



**Remarks by the
Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the FAA Global Leadership Meeting**

(Virtual Event, 29 September 2020)

As I begin these remarks today, passenger capacity in North America is down over 60%.

Over a hundred million U.S. and Canadian passengers who would normally have taken to the skies this year were hindered, along with the rest of the world's societies and economies, by the continuing global pandemic that is COVID-19.

The most direct result of this downturn has been an over \$30 billion dollar loss in industry revenue over just a seven month period.

This in turn has led to the hemorrhaging of hundreds of thousands of North American jobs, affecting people young and old who once depended on air transport, tourism, and many other aviation-related careers and businesses for their basic livelihoods.

Globally this number climbs well into the millions being affected, and for societies in some cases much more vulnerable and less-developed than your own.

I'm sure that many of us here today have friends or family who have been among these millions of affected men and women.

I'm also sure that, as aviation leaders, we recognized our solemn obligation to assure them that we will reconnect the world and get it working again post-pandemic.

Importantly, we must learn the lessons this disease is teaching us, and make our global network, and all aviation livelihoods, more resilient to future pandemic threats.

This moment we now have to 'build back better' in aviation presents further opportunities we should not lose sight of in other areas of air transport resilience and sustainability.

This includes all of our current objectives for aviation safety, security, environmental and economic sustainability, and the global airport and airspace capacity challenges which will assuredly be back on our to-do lists in a few years' time.

All of this will require significant amounts and new forms of aviation innovation going forward, including in terms of how regulators and standards setters assess and adopt these for global benefit.

The Council was prescient in focusing ICAO on an innovation theme for 2020-2024 period, and I wish to assure you that we will be your trusted partner in helping to make the rulemaking processes and timelines associated with urgently needed technologies as streamlined as possible going forward.

In terms of ICAO and government response to COVID-19, I was greatly encouraged during the first year of this council presidency to see how much urgency there was among countries to work together on this challenge.

Those of us in the ICAO Council, of which the United States is a founding and longstanding member, acted very quickly to establish the Aviation Recovery Task Force, and its CART Report and 'Take-off' guidelines.

These are now being employed all over the world, and the Task Force is presently reviewing a number of Take-off Guideline amendments as part of its upcoming CART/7 Phase II deliverables.

The ICAO Secretariat was also very quick to respond to the pandemic's impacts, rapidly adapting a mechanism to alleviate some regulatory requirements for States, and establishing information sharing and monitoring platforms including for safety operational measures.

To-date over 95% of ICAO Members States, covering all major air transport markets, are providing us with real-time traffic data through these platforms which is greatly assisting our pandemic monitoring, analysis, and forecasting efforts.

Global and region-specific ICAO roadmaps are also helping drive response coordination globally, but admittedly the varying pandemic medical status country-to-country poses continuing challenges to a more extensive harmonization of recovery measures.

Further important efforts on behalf of the ICAO Secretariat include the pandemic-focused webinars, training, implementation 'iPACKs', and guidance materials it has produced, in addition to a global Airport Status app using real-time NOTAM data, and tools to address the API Data Service.

I would like to appreciate here the United States' generous extra-budgetary financial contribution which permitted the development of the iPACKs, as these are now being made use of and appreciated by many countries all over the world.

Additional and important pandemic public health coordination is also being undertaken through the ICAO CAPSCA mechanism, notably on Public Health Corridor initiatives and the validating of industry CART adherence.

Please recall the ICAO State Letter published last month which provides extensive information on how to establish Public Health Corridors, including by promoting the mutual recognition of public health measures through multilateral agreements.

In a few years' time the worst of this pandemic will be behind us, and we will start looking toward the 41st ICAO Assembly and some of the systemic issues we will need to address there.

We'll need to resolve the new working cycles of ICAO at that time, and the proposal for mid-triennium high level meeting to better inform budget proposals submitted to upcoming Assemblies.

This may also see the role of the Assembly Technical Committee evolving to manage the strategic plans of the Organization.

Becoming more proactive and responsive on innovation will require formalized and more effective engagement with industry, and new ways of assuring technical assistance and cooperation among States.

These policy issues will have significant bearing on the future work program of ICAO, and the Assembly should be poised to address them.

Looking ahead, we also need to recognize that for traditional industry growth to resume effectively, regional and national plans to continue or resume air navigation capacity and efficiency improvements will need careful attention in terms of government financial planning and investment.

This is especially the case while operators are unable to promote and pay for that investment with traditional user fee schemes.

And while the hiatus from the capacity issues at some of the world's busiest airports and airspace sectors has given us some breathing space to agree on new standards now needed in these areas, the further needs respective of UAS and the Global Trust Framework continue unabated.

Aviation emissions, while unnaturally low at the moment, will also be on the rise again post-pandemic, and more operators will need to start making the types of commitments to net-zero emissions like the **oneworld** alliance announced at our recent ICAO environment event.

These commitments, in unison with the bold targets being announced by manufacturers toward the realization of zero-emission commercial aircraft, and the work already underway by States through ICAO, give me tremendous hope and confidence that air transport sustainability will be assured in line with the expectations of both current and future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a great deal ahead of us in the near- and longer-term, and while many challenges still lie ahead I would like my main message today to be one of hope for what's to come.

Regional coordination has improved as a result of this pandemic, and ICAO's Global Plans and their supporting frameworks and monitoring tools will continue to keep countries moving as one post-pandemic, toward our key safety and other aviation performance objectives.

The interconnectedness of the pandemic events, and the global response required, has also reminded States of why multilateral platforms such as ICAO's are so relevant to not only their global, but also their national aspirations.

Building back better from COVID-19 provides an opportunity to benefit each of us, and us all.

The United States has been a leader in civil aviation since the dawn of powered flight, and that same leadership will be looked to in the years which lie ahead.

And while closer industry engagement on innovation and other issues will doubtless be part of our collective aviation futures going forward, we must also ensure that we safeguard the traditional independence of the regulatory system, and not allow our due diligence to be superseded by other factors.

Working as one aviation team there is much that be accomplished, and ICAO looks forward to the results we can achieve together.

Thank you.