



**Remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu
to the Nineth Meeting of the Steering Committee
of the ITU World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2020**

(Virtual Meeting, 7 September 2020)

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests and colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It's my pleasure and honor to speak to you today as you begin this final week of the Virtual WSIS 2020 Forum.
2. Your objectives relating to how information and communications technologies can support SDGs attainment are important to both myself and ICAO Member States for two key reasons.
3. In the first place, increased air transport digitalization promotes efficiencies which improve our sector's capabilities as a catalyst for socio-economic and sustainability benefits.
4. This is especially relevant given that ICAO-compliant air services and international connectivity are already improving global outcomes toward the achievement of 15 of the 17 SDGs.
5. Secondly, COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on local and global air connectivity, and on the many countries and operators that made it possible.

6. It has also tragically impacted the lives of the hundreds of millions of economically vulnerable men and women around the world who depend on aviation and tourism for their very livelihoods, and placed many protected ecosystems at risk due to their reliance on tourist visit revenues and international connectivity by air.
7. The scope of these impacts has required government subsidies and bailouts to maintain even a basic air transport capacity in some countries.
8. It is also providing an opportunity for air transport to build back better via new technologies and innovations.
9. Whether we are talking entirely new technologies, or new applications of existing technologies, digital, AR, and AI solutions are now at hand to permit us to pre-screen passengers and cargo more extensively than ever before, for both health and security risks, and with greater efficiency and less disruption.
10. Digital communications will also underscore the next generation of autonomous aircraft, drone, and the transformations they will lead to in personal mobility, e-commerce, civilian and community services, and many other applications.
11. With innovation and digitization set to play such an important role in how we restart and recover on a more sustainable path, and at an ever increasing rate, ICAO is embracing it today as never before.
12. We're working to achieve greater flexibility, responsiveness, and efficiency where the assessment and rule-making on emerging technologies is concerned, and an important part of my message to you today is that you can count on us to be your committed and effective partner going forward in all things innovation related.
13. I would also like to thank ITU for its cooperation on the use of the ICAO Carbon Emissions calculator within the context of the Environmental Management Group.

14. Many older and more emissions-intensive aircraft are being pulled from the skies during COVID-19, and in significant numbers.
15. This presents opportunities to assure a much greener post-COVID fleet, and in light of recent targets which were set the age of electric commercial aircraft could even be upon us by next decade.
16. I must emphasize as well the critical need for all of our digital and cyber-security capacities to mature together, limiting and not augmenting risks and vulnerabilities as we realize new progress.
17. We have a great deal we can accomplish together, and ICAO will continue to rely on the partnership and vision of the ITU as we progress together toward a greener, more sustainable, and more innovative digital future for coming generations.
18. Thank you.