



**Congratulatory Speech by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
to the Aviation Safety Seminar: Aviation Recovery in the Face of COVID-19
organized by the Republic of Korea**

(Virtual Event, 8 December 2020)

Good day, Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, and colleagues. I am honoured to be invited to address this seminar.

1. COVID-19 has placed unprecedented restrictions on our ability to travel by air and explore the world.
2. Its economic impacts, which are being so heavily borne by airlines and airports and the many companies which support their operations, have also extended out to imperil the entire travel and tourism ecosystem.
3. This has placed many communities and regions at economic risk, and threatened the livelihoods of millions all over the world.
4. It's also important to acknowledge that air transport doesn't only generate trillions of dollars in global economic activity each year, or the tens of millions of jobs which rely on that activity.
5. It has also created an entire world of connections which let us learn about and share with people from other cultures and regions, and through those interactions promote global peace and prosperity.
6. For all of these reasons, the safe, secure, and sustainable recovery of the aviation sector is a matter of urgent priority today.
7. And very close and effective collaboration, among all aviation stakeholders, and between national aviation and public health authorities, is essential to these goals.

8. Because of the global nature of pandemic threats, multilateral agencies like the WHO and ICAO must play a key role in achieving these results.
9. Countries look to us to assess and inform them on the worldwide situation, establish the international coordination frameworks required, and through those frameworks deliver the guidelines, recovery resources, and data they need to realize an aligned and effective global response.
10. Our rapid reaction to COVID-19 at the Council level of ICAO was through its Aviation Recovery Task Force, or 'CART'.
11. The CART Task Force produced global response and recovery 'Take-off' Guidelines which were first issued in June, and these have been playing a key global role in helping to align the air transport recoveries of many countries and regions.
12. This alignment in turn is helping to encourage further positive results, notably of late through initiatives such as the public health corridors and travel bubbles it recommends.
13. By promoting these solutions, and the more effective coordination they rely on among national aviation and public health authorities, we are seeing some early steps toward a re-establishment of public confidence in air travel again.
14. Earlier last month, the CART issued a new and updated set of *Phase II* recovery guidelines for States.
15. The *Phase II* guidance recommends, among its many revised provisions, that countries assess their passenger testing options using the risk assessment tools in the new manual which ICAO has just published for this purpose.
16. The objective here again is to accelerate every safe and prudent means of restoring public confidence in air travel, while national governments exercise their sovereign right to take whatever measures are necessary to protect the lives of their citizens.

17. While the safety of passengers in terms of public health factors is a primary concern right now, at the same time we must be vigilant in aviation to assure that the diminished finances of airline and airport operators do not result in relaxed safety commitments or poor safety performance in more traditional areas.
18. Recognizing this paramount role of safety in aviation, the CART Take-Off Guidelines and relevant ICAO manuals therefore provide useful guidance to help States avoid having to issue temporary alleviations to global ICAO standards.
19. These alleviations were essential to keep aircraft moving and protect air crew at the outset of the pandemic, and ICAO was very rapid in responding to the situation as it unfolded and developing these measures.
20. But by helping countries to move toward addressing their latest challenges as aspects of our COVID-19 “new normal” conditions, we’re also able to improve consistency and build upon decades of safe aviation experience.
21. Ladies and gentlemen, with international solidarity, and deliberate attention to harmonized and flexible solutions being so essential to current global objectives for pandemic recovery, it is therefore my honour today to commend this latest initiative of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea.
22. Today’s seminar sets a very commendable example of how to confront and recover from the pandemic, and ICAO is grateful for the Republic of Korea’s continued commitments and success in addressing its international objectives, engaging with industry, and promoting CART provisions.
23. No matter what we may be facing now, or how long it may take us to recover fully from this unprecedented year, I am always reassured by the fact that air transport is a critical engine of social and economic development in our world.

24. International flight will one day return to the prominence it once enjoyed, and let all of us take to the skies once again, and the commitments and actions being exemplified by the Government of the Republic of Korea here today will help us reach that objective safely and efficiently and sustainably.
25. Thank you.