

# **ICAO Air Transport Symposium: Strategies and Tools for Sustainable Air Transport**

## **Panel Discussion – The last Word: Strategies and Tools for Sustainability**

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Conclusions by the Moderator, Vijay Poonoosamy, Vice President International & Public Affairs Etihad Airways and Chair of the IATA Industry Affairs Committee

The President of the Council and the Secretary General of ICAO, Ladies and Gentlemen, our three objectives are to:

- Identify the impediments to a sustainable air transport system;
- Define the strategies likely to create the conditions for a sustainable air transport system; and
- Identify the tools which would allow us to implement these.

I thank the distinguished Moderators of all the previous sessions, Professor Oun and all of you for the valuable contributions and now my final words.

Let me start with the impediments that have been identified: simply stated, our current air transport system is too fragmented, whether it is from a geographical, regulatory or economic point of view. Moreover, we must recognise that air transport will never be stronger than its weakest link.

ICAO's most valuable work on safety, security and air navigation relates to and is dependent on air transport and ICAO must thus focus more on air transport.

Airlines' and airports' financial losses and mismanagement are threats to the whole value chain sustainability; the current national rules of air carrier ownership and control are also major impediments which have a bearing on airline financing.

Closely linked to this is the liberalisation of the market access although ICAO has a critical role to play to ensure fair competition.

Other issues relate to passengers rights and protection, because any business or any service provider which overlooks the consumer or end user interests is on the wrong track. However, the lack of harmonization of the different regulatory approaches with regards to conditions of carriage, airline insolvency and airline pricing transparency and the conflicts between national passenger rights regulations, some of which unintentionally work against passengers, are impediments.

Visa restrictions and burdensome visa, customs, security and immigration processes are also frustrating impediments when enhanced facilitation should be promoted.

Non-compliance with ICAO standards remains serious impediments but so are national or regional lists against some foreign airlines and airports.

The lack of efficient and cost-effective aviation infrastructures on the ground and in the air are serious obstacles. ICAO guidance on airport financing will help and the ICAO 12<sup>th</sup> Air Navigation Conference must fast track implementation of the long awaited global air navigation systems.

The lack of the required human resources going forward is also a significant impediment.

The crippling costs of jet fuel, the unavailability of environmentally efficient aircraft and engines, the unavailability of cost effective and sustainable bio fuels as well as national and regional environment schemes dealing with the international air transport are serious impediments.

Taxation and other levies on the international air transport are also major impediments for the sustainable development of air transport.

It is simply senseless for countries desperately trying to stimulate economic growth to stifle the airlines and airports which are the engines of growth.

In these exceptionally difficult times governments should not clip the wings of a sector that makes economies take off.

Governments should instead undo and refrain from doing anything that inhibits travel and tourism.

As for the strategies to create a seamless and sustainable air transport system we need harmonized provisions through multilateral instruments because global problems require global solutions. We need to think locally and regionally but act globally.

ICAO must play an enhanced role in air transport global policy making in support of sustainable air transport failing which its critical role in the areas of safety and security will be undermined.

ICAO must diligently agree on a global basket of measures to deal with the impact of air transport on climate change.

Other ways to lift existing barriers include regulatory arrangements which would facilitate airline access to international capital markets and relaxation of rules for airline designation and authorisation in order to move beyond national ownership and control requirements, hence allowing foreign investment in national airlines.

ICAO could promote best management practices in airlines, airports, air navigation service providers and regulators.

In defining a level playing field, a transparent, multilateral approach by ICAO would be a promising solution. Such definition should take into account issues such as subsidies, state aid, airline capacity dumping and airport access, including slot allocation and night-flight restrictions

As for the tools identified to support the implementation of the strategies I have just mentioned, it is clear that ICAO is the only forum for elaborating global and effective solutions for a safe, secure, viable, efficient, cost-effective and hence sustainable air transport system.

ICAO must indeed develop the smart, efficient, effective and harmonized global framework and value-added ground rules to ensure that all the stakeholders of air transport enjoy optimum benefits.

Effectiveness could require ICAO and the 6<sup>th</sup> ICAO Worldwide Air Transport Conference to work towards developing an annex to the Chicago Convention on the sustainability of air transport.

But let us humbly recognise that to achieve any of the foregoing requires a worldwide culture of communication and cooperation because as States and ICAO, as air navigation service providers and CANSO, as airlines and IATA, as airports and ACI, as consumers, as employees, as aircraft and engine manufacturers and as all air transport academicians we need each other and we depend on each other.

We are and we will remain a community of linked interests and together we will make a formidable difference.

Thank you, Merci, Shukran, Spasiba, Xie Xie, Gracias