



Digital innovations important to aviation ‘building back better’ from COVID-19, ICAO SG tells ITU World Summit

For immediate release

Montréal, 7 September 2020 – In her remarks today at the official opening of the [final week of the Virtual World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\) Forum 2020](#), ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu underscored that information and communications technologies are critical to aviation’s role in global UN Sustainable Development Goal attainment, and to how air transport will build back better post-COVID-19.

“Increased air transport digitalization promotes critical efficiencies and capabilities which improve our sector’s capabilities as a catalyst for socio-economic and sustainability benefits,” Dr. Liu stated. “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.”

Summarizing the devastation COVID-19 is now wreaking on global air connectivity, Dr. Liu also strongly emphasized how digital capabilities will be critical to air transport’s post-pandemic recovery.

“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,” Dr. Liu said. “They also provide the foundations for the next generation of autonomous aircraft, drones, and the transformations that Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) will lead to in terms of personal mobility, e-commerce, civilian and community services, and many other applications.”

Dr. Liu also reiterated that, 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.

“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,” Dr. Liu commented. “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.”



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About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and guidance necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States.

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