



ICAO leaders address North, Central American and Caribbean health, transport, and tourism ministers

For immediate release

Montréal, 29 October 2020 – As part of an important two-day event bringing together ICAO North and Central American and Caribbean Directors General of Civil Aviation, and their respective ministers of health, transport and tourism, ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano and ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu delivered important updates and calls to action on the latest priorities concerning international air transport and COVID-19.

The Council President told the aviation and political officials that COVID-19 has now infected over 43 million people globally, leading to over 1.2 million fatalities.

“These impacts have posed tremendous challenges for national and civic leaders, and they have also shaken the air industry, and tested its resilience, but we have also adapted quickly and effectively in order to ensure vital operations.”

Noting that many NACC States are Small Island nations which are highly reliant on international travellers for their basic prosperity and sustainability, the President also recognized how the pandemic’s effects on restricting air travel had led to national hospitality and tourism sectors being particularly hard hit.

Mr. Sciacchitano also updated the local senior officials on the progress and priorities surrounding upcoming amendments to the ‘Take-off’ pandemic response Guidelines, which were originally issued by the ICAO Council’s Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), in early June.

“Using the extensive data and monitoring being realized by your States in coordination with the ICAO Secretariat, the latest updates to the CART Guidelines focus on the evolving technological and medical advancements in the fight against COVID-19, as well as the feedback received from CART and other stakeholders,” he commented.

Recognizing the sovereignty and authority of States over their national recovery, President Sciacchitano urged the NACC States to use the CART guidance to align their measures, while upholding each State’s prerogative to implement additional and/or alternative mitigation measures in accordance with their specific needs and circumstances.

“The collective, coordinated, and committed efforts of States and the industry to mitigate pandemic risks through a combination of measures will be the key to the restart and recovery of aviation and strengthen public confidence in air travel,” he underscored.

The new CART Guidelines will be available after their formal review and endorsement by the ICAO Council.

In her opening NACC remarks, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu emphasized everything the UN agency’s Secretariat had been undertaking to support countries, the air transport sector, and the implementation of the CART guidance on an aligned global basis.

Those efforts have included keeping critical cargo supply chains functioning so that urgently-needed food and medical supplies could get to where they were urgently needed, and key

coordination support for humanitarian and emergency air services, and the early repatriation of hundreds of thousands of people who had been internationally stranded by COVID-19.

“We have also developed wide-ranging adaptation guidance and resources to support regulators and operators,” she added, “and helped to define a risk-based Public Health Corridor (PHC) concept which countries are now benefitting from.”

Dr. Liu regretted that despite the significant coordination ICAO has helped achieve among nations globally, COVID-19’s impacts have still led to catastrophic restrictions in the global movement of peoples and goods, and to the economic isolation of many countries and regions around the world.

“Not only air operators, but many thousands of workers here in the NACC, and businesses large and small, are now dealing with the economic peril of its daily effects,” she underscored. “Latin American and Caribbean passengers have declined by roughly 85 million, translating to an over 60% decrease in capacity and financial losses in the area of 17 billion dollars.”

After a detailed overview of current global and regional impacts on passenger and cargo operations, Dr. Liu noted that recent and slight upturns in traffic and passenger volumes have been largely insignificant when weighed against the depth and severity of the unprecedented COVID-19 low-points we recorded.

“These factors, in conjunction with the fact that airlines and airports are still being counted on to quickly move urgent and essential air cargo wherever the world needs it, stresses the critical importance of public financial support for air transport operators and regulators at this time.”



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Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) Documents

[ICAO's COVID-19 Portal](#)

[ICAO's North, Central American and Caribbean Regional Office](#)

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially recognized air transport stakeholders.

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