



ICAO Council President highlights challenges and path forward for post-pandemic aviation

For immediate release

Montréal, 19 April 2021 – ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano told Latin American civil aviation leaders today that the sector should expect to encounter a range of challenges as air travel begins its return to normal.

The President's comments were part of the Keynote remarks he provided to the Hermes Air Transport event on 'Resilience and efficiency through Leadership and Cooperation' in the post-COVID era for Latin American aviation.

"We are back to 2003 levels in terms of global seat capacity," President Sciacchitano commented, explaining that ICAO is projecting an overall global reduction in passengers of between forty-one and fifty percent for 2021, compared to the sixty per cent reduction it monitored for 2020.

"The significant downturns being withstood in global and regional air travel continue to present severe liquidity strains to companies and suppliers," he emphasized, "and across the full extent of the air transport and tourism value chains."

The majority of the President's remarks underscored how the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) has been proactively considering the challenges which now lay ahead. He explained that under its latest Phase III response and recovery recommendations new priorities had been identified to aid the international alignment of measures and to promote more effective public-private cooperation among governments and industry.

"This latest Phase of the CART's guidance and recommendations has targeted specific issues relating to States' multilayer risk management strategies. It supports the creation of public health travel corridors, promotes safe and efficient global vaccine distribution and multilateral all-cargo air services, and encourages standardized COVID-19 testing certificates for secure international use," the President confirmed.

"They also include updated air crew vaccination considerations, safety priorities relating to sectoral recovery, and an encouragement for national civil aviation and transport officials to advocate more vigorously for air transport public health and economic priorities."

President Sciacchitano highlighted that near-term success with these objectives would rely on the establishment of national and regional risk management strategies to gradually open air routes, and on national decision-makers taking fuller account of air transport's role as an enabler and multiplier of economic resilience and recovery.

The potentially profound long-term implications for traditional air transport business models and operations post pandemic were also identified as a key concern for aviation leaders going forward, whether due to accelerating digitization or higher passenger expectations for healthier and more sustainable travel options.

The last area of priority he identified concerned improving current levels of cooperation and information sharing on recovery strategies and lessons learned.

The President concluded by stressing that “the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health crisis – it is also an economic and financial crisis presenting governments with very difficult trade-offs in terms of the health, economic, and social priorities concerned.”

He noted that ICAO had scheduled a high-level conference on these topics for this October, and commended Latin American States for the new regional air cargo liberalization agreement to bolster vaccine transport and long-term recovery across Latin America, and for the overall pandemic resilience and responsiveness they have been demonstrating to date.

The ICAO President’s remarks were delivered alongside a separate keynote presentation by the Director General of the Airports Council International (ACI), Mr. Luis Felipe de Oliveira. Other civil dignitaries present included Mr. Jeff Poole and Dr. Kostas Iatrou, respectively the President and Director General of the Hermes Air Transport Organisation, the Secretary General of the Latin-American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), Mr. Jaime Binder, the Director General of the Colombian Civil Aviation Authority and ICAO Secretary General elect, Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, the Executive Director & CEO of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA), Mr. José Ricardo Botelho, and regional directors for ACI and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO).



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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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