

Message from Sebastian Mikosz

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A legacy of sustainability leadership

The climate crisis is an international crisis that can only be resolved through coordinated global action. Nowhere is this more the case than with aviation – the very definition of an international business sector. For air transport to work, it needs transparent rules that work globally. That is the case for traffic rights, for safety, and for operations, to name just three. It should be no different for sustainability.

This is why ICAO is the foundation of our business. We rely on ICAO's Member States to set the governance framework through which air transport can operate fairly and efficiently. And on climate change, ICAO has already delivered some far-reaching goals, the most significant of which is the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). CORSIA is the bridge between ongoing efficiency improvements that have already delivered substantial emissions reductions per km flown, and a world in which overall CO₂ from aviation begins to decline. By stabilizing emissions to an agreed baseline, CORSIA caps the growth in emissions from international traffic, giving aviation vital breathing space while we ramp up the deployment of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and the research into radical new zero-emissions propulsion technology.

The success of the CORSIA agreement was one of the elements that underpinned the decision by airlines to commit to net-zero CO₂ by 2050. This historic agreement, made by IATA members at our 77th AGM in October last year, reveals the depth of the industry's commitment to sustainability, even in the teeth of COVID-19, the worst crisis to ever hit our business in peacetime. The concurrent commitment by airports, air navigation service providers, and key manufacturers to net zero was equally important, showing the collective will of our entire industry. But while we are determined to reach our goal, we know that we cannot do it alone—government support will be essential.

Therefore, a signal from ICAO that it is looking to build a long-term aspirational goal for aviation emissions is vitally important. An LTAG that is the industry's own commitments will be a huge boost to airlines looking to work with their stakeholders and governments for practical environmental solutions. ICAO can



help set the framework for coordinated global action, rooted in a desire to continue to enable more and more people to have access to the freedom and prosperity air travel creates, and to do so sustainably.

A collective global vision and framework for managing and reducing aviation CO₂ would set a realistic goal for emissions that is rooted in science and aligned with the UNFCCC Paris Agreement to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees. It would focus on strategies to develop SAF on a substantial scale, while understanding the possibilities afforded by electric and hydrogen propulsion. It would outline the opportunities to make air traffic control more efficient, help maximize the efficiency of infrastructure, adopt a pragmatic approach to carbon capture solutions, and look to ensure that climate financing is raised in a way that helps accelerate the deployment of CO₂ reduction initiatives, rather than seeking to “punish” passengers for their choice of travel mode through a regulatory patchwork introduced by regions and states.

A long-term goal for aviation's climate impact, reconfirming ICAO's leadership of this vital issue, would be a fine legacy for this year's Triennial Assembly, and IATA and our members stand ready to assist and work with the ICAO Secretariat and member states in its historic task of growing the unique and positive power of sustainable air connectivity.