



**Address by
the President of the ICAO Council,
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Global Symposium
on the Implementation of Innovation
in Aviation**

(Montreal, Virtual Format, 8 December 2020)

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening, depending where you are, dear participants in the Global Symposium on the Implementation of Innovation in Aviation! A special welcome to the Premier of Quebec, Mr Francois Legault who will address you in a few minutes!

It is my pleasure to open this Symposium today recalling that yesterday we celebrated the International Civil Aviation Day. 76 years ago, on 7 December 1944, the Chicago Convention was signed and ICAO was established.

Additionally, I like to recall that approximately on these same days 117 years ago, and more precisely on 14 December 1903, a powered aircraft took off for the first time flying for just 3 seconds.

Innovation has been the essence of aviation, whether since the first successful flight of the Wright brothers in 1903, or if I may refer to my own Italian roots, since the first sketches of the flying machine imagined by Leonardo da Vinci several centuries ago.

The fascination that these early pioneers shared has fueled continuous conception and innovation, and today their spirit of invention still guides the ideas and discoveries of world-class engineers and technicians.

Together they have driven ground-breaking changes to airframes and engines, and advanced the science and technology of air navigation to heights which no early aviators could ever have imagined.

Over recent decades, aeronautical innovations have permitted the development of truly global flight network, and one of humanity's greatest examples of successful international cooperation.

They have also helped air travel to become safer, more secure, more affordable, and more sustainable.

With each new decade comes new opportunities for innovation, and I anticipate the next ten years will be one of the most exciting and challenging our sector has ever faced in terms of the sheer scope and diversity of the developments now taking place.

With this diversity comes new entrants and many non- traditional aviation players, innovators who can often be surprised by the scale of the global regulatory framework which allows for international aviation, and by the detailed responsibilities they face in having their products and services assessed and integrated into our system.

A compounding factor of this dynamic has been the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis environment it has led to has been an accelerator for many new innovations in general, and aviation developments are taking place in numerous areas as well, with contactless passenger screening and the digitalization of the supply chain being just two of many examples.

The pandemic has also driven new developments and toward a greener and more sustainable air transport sector, a dynamic which ICAO is driving momentum on at every opportunity.

We must enable an ambitious decarbonisation path for this sector, and I have been encouraged by the participation and commitments which were recently achieved at two ICAO events in this area, one of which took specific stock of the new technologies and green innovations coming online and the opportunities those present for us in terms of the near- and longer-term sustainability of our sector. I was also encouraged by the commitment of several airlines to pursue the zero CO2 emission objective by 2050.

At the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly last year, countries directed the Council to evolve the Organization's policies, processes, and partnerships in order to improve the sector's overall capability to assess and integrate new innovations.

A decision has therefore been made to formalize a dialogue with the industry at the strategic level, through the creation of a dedicated High-level Forum on innovation. Going forward we will work together toward a more fit-for-purpose and harmonized regulatory framework that facilitates the integration of new technologies.

The Council of ICAO has also adopted an innovation-focused theme for ICAO through 2023, to help ensure that all related objectives remain suitably in focus and prioritized in the near-term.

By building from our sector's traditional strengths in terms of consensus and cooperation, we can innovate to face down the greatest challenge international aviation has ever faced, and emerge from it more resilient and more sustainable.

Thank you, and may I wish you a very productive and engaging event.