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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 29: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**AVIATION'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

(Presented by the Airports Council International (ACI), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), International Coordinating Council for Aerospace Industries Associations (ICCAIA))

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The aviation industry is a global force for good, bringing together people, businesses and communities and supporting trade and tourism around the world. The benefits of safe, reliable and cost-effective air transport can help support many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and should be seen as a development imperative by governments the world over.

This Information Paper asks ICAO Member States to take note of the information contained in a new report by the Air Transport Action Group - *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders* - which explores the role aviation and its associated connectivity plays in the world and how air transport can support the United Nations global sustainable development framework.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) has worked closely with Oxford Economics to undertake a macroeconomic assessment of aviation's global economic impact. This research was combined with a holistic overview of the social, economic and environmental aspects of air transport. Its findings include:

- Commercial aviation supports nearly 63 million jobs and \$2.7 trillion in global GDP. Nearly 10 million of those jobs are generated directly by the industry itself (at airports, airlines, air navigation service providers and manufacturers).
  - 450,000 jobs worldwide are generated by airport operators.
  - 5.5 million global jobs are on-site at airports (in retail, government agencies and other services, not including those jobs counted in other categories).

- 2.7 million people are directly employed by airlines.
  - 1.1 million engineers, designers and executives work in civil aerospace manufacturing.
  - 220,000 jobs are generated by air navigation service providers.
- Aviation transports over a third of world trade by value: some \$6.4 trillion in 2014, with over 50 million tonnes carried (less than 1% of trade by volume).
  - Air transport is also an enabler of tourism, with 54% of all international tourists travelling to their destinations by air.
  - The global aviation system comprises over 50,000 routes connecting 3,883 commercial airports through 1,402 airlines, carrying over 3.5 billion passengers on nearly 35 million flights a year. The industry's fleet of 26,065 aircraft are guided safely through the skies by 173 air navigation service providers.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORTED BY AIR TRANSPORT

2.1 In 2015, the world's governments, through the United Nations, agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting the 17 SDGs which aim to set priorities and stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the world: people, planet, prosperity and peace.

2.1.1 *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders* recognises that air transport can help support at least some aspects of 14 out of the 17 SDGs. Through generating connectivity between nations, aviation is a key driver of economic and social development:

**SDG 1) End poverty:** Aviation directly creates jobs in the industry, as well as other sectors indirectly, providing 62.7 million people worldwide with their livelihoods.

**SDG 2) Zero hunger:** Aviation supports the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to areas devastated by natural disasters and war, both through the World Food Programme and other charities. In 2014, more than 70,000 tonnes of food and commodities were delivered by air to relieve victims of floods, conflict and disease.

**SDG 3) Good health and wellbeing:** Aviation assists with providing vital medical care through the use of air ambulances in remote communities and transporting time-sensitive medical supplies, such as vaccines. Aviation also plays a major role in disaster relief.

**SDG 4) Quality education:** Aviation enables the movement of students worldwide, providing access to educational opportunities. The industry itself also champions quality education for its own employees in areas such as engineering, air traffic management and pilot training. The manufacturing sector in particular is also working hard to promote education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**SDG 5) Gender equality:** Aviation is working to achieve gender balance across the sector. In Europe, aviation is the most gender-balanced of all transport modes. Work is still needed to encourage balance in technical areas such as engineering and flight crew.

**SDG 7) Affordable and clean energy:** The aviation industry is working to develop cleaner sustainable alternative fuels, as well as deploying renewable energy at airports. By the end of 2016, it is expected that 5,500 flights will have taken place using sustainable alternative fuels.

**SDG 8) Decent work and economic growth:** As well as providing employment opportunities, aviation contributes \$2.7 trillion to global GDP, 3.5% of the global total. In 2014, \$6.8 trillion worth of cargo was transported by air.

**SDG 9) Industry, innovation and infrastructure:** Aviation is one of the most innovative industries in the world. The manufacturing sector is continually developing new technology and creates significant urban infrastructure through the building of airports, as well as air traffic management. In 2014, airports invested \$37 billion in construction projects, creating jobs and building new infrastructure.

**SDG 10) Reduced inequalities:** The connectivity provided by air transport reduces inequality between countries, as well as individuals, through creating trade links and providing access to good and services for those in remote communities. The democratisation of air travel has also meant that air services are available to more people than ever. Since 1970, the real cost of air travel has been reduced by over 60%.

**SDG 11) Sustainable cities and communities:** Aviation-related infrastructure is a major part of urban and rural communities worldwide and contributes to the connectivity of populations through integrated transport links. More work is needed on multimodal transport development.

**SDG 12) Responsible consumption and production:** Airlines and manufacturers work closely together to dispose of aircraft at their end-of-life responsibly. In recent years, the industry has also been working to develop sustainable alternative fuel feedstocks that avoid some of the issues present in previous bioenergy projects.

**SDG 13) Climate action:** All sectors of the aviation industry have agreed on a four-pillar strategy for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and are making excellent progress working towards three global climate goals.

**SDG 15) Life on land:** Aviation is working with partners in government and conservation organisations to combat the illegal wildlife trade.

**SDG 17) Partnership for the goals:** Partnerships between all sectors of the aviation industry enable the global air transport industry to operate: airports, airline, air traffic management, manufacturers and suppliers. The industry also partners with the United Nations (mainly through the International Civil Aviation Organization) and governments to develop regulations and cooperate closely on climate action.

### 3. REGIONAL BENEFITS AND GROWTH PROSPECTS

3.1 *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders* breaks down the economic and social benefits of air transport by region and in some national statistics. It also explores the potential for growth in air transport, with a forecast global average growth rate of 4.3% per annum.

- **Africa:** Air transport supports 6.8 million jobs and \$72.5 billion in GDP in Africa. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 5.4%.

- **Asia-Pacific:** Air transport supports 28.8 million jobs and \$626 billion in GDP in Asia-Pacific. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 5.1%.
- **Europe:** Air transport supports 11.9 million jobs and \$860 (€707.5) billion in GDP in Europe. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 3.4%.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Air transport supports 5.2 million jobs and \$167 billion in GDP in Latin America and the Caribbean. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 4.7%.
- **Middle East:** Air transport supports 2.4 million jobs and \$157.2 billion in GDP in the Middle East. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 6%.
- **North America:** Air transport supports 7.6 million jobs and \$791 billion in GDP in North America. The forecast per-annum average growth for the next 20 years is 2.7%.

3.2 Based on current industry growth rates, it is expected that air transport will support 99.1 million jobs and \$5.9 trillion in global GDP in 2034. However, should growth turn out to be just one percentage point lower per annum in the next two decades, over 10 million fewer jobs would be supported and a trillion dollars would be reduced from the sector's contribution to global GDP.

3.3 This highlights the importance of government support for air transport development, as a conduit for further connectivity, social advancement, trade and tourism worldwide.

3.4 All parts of the aviation industry, represented by the associations submitting this Information Paper, are firmly committed to a sustainable future for air transport. This can be evidenced by our support and encouragement for the global offsetting scheme for aviation and our climate action plan.

## 4. ACCESSING THE REPORT

4.1 The report is available in electronic format, downloadable through [www.aviationbenefits.org](http://www.aviationbenefits.org).

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the information and analysis provided in *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders*;
- b) distribute the report widely amongst their government colleagues and to make use of the data wherever and whenever possible to highlight the value of connectivity.

5.2 We also invite individual States to recognise the global, regional and national benefits of aviation and to embrace this proactively in policies that encourage the further development of aviation as a driver of economic, social and other benefits.