



**Address by the
President of the ICAO Council,
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
on the occasion of
World Environment Day 2020**

(ICAO Council Chamber, 8 June)

Since 1972 and the opening of the Stockholm Convention on the Human Environment, World Environment Day has been celebrated every 5th of June as an initiative to stimulate global awareness of environmental issues and encourage action.

This year the theme of World Environment Day is “Celebrate Biodiversity”. Its purpose is to remind us to put Nature at the heart of all our decision-making. Biodiversity is the foundation that supports all life on land and below water. It affects every aspect of human health, providing clean air and water, nutritious foods, scientific understanding and medicine sources, natural disease resistance, and climate change mitigation.

The World Environment Day 2020 host country is Colombia, in partnership with Germany.

‘Nature’, in the context of this year’s theme, should be appreciated as the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the climate that makes our planet habitable.

Nature is sending us a clear message as we confront today’s unprecedented pandemic events. It is telling that to preserve humanity, humanity needs to preserve Nature.

People will need to recognize this more than ever when it comes time to rebuild a better future for the Planet.

We need to be conscious that the pandemic is providing us a profound opportunity to rethink the way we do business, and to steer the aviation sector on a more sustainable and inclusive path.

States’ financial recovery packages, for example, could be designed to prioritize greener, more resilient air services, and foster ambitious climate action supporting decarbonization.

Nature and biodiversity are an integral part of ICAO’s Environmental work, for example in the development, deployment, and promotion of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), where consideration has been given to key sustainability aspects related to the preservation of natural resources, including water sources, land use change effects, and biodiversity.

And we might also wish to appreciate how Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) can immediately serve as a safe and cost-efficient means of assisting with ecological observations and biodiversity conservation.

Many other important linkages between civil aviation, nature, and biodiversity can also be appreciated with respect to the impacts on bird species around airports, the illegal trafficking in wildlife by air, the establishment of national parks as tourist attractions, or the ecological impacts which tourists bring to fragile ecosystems.

Even passengers conscious of the environmental impact of their travel, including their CO₂ footprints, plays into this year's theme.

Innovation remains essential to how we will address aviation's environmental performance, consistent with the current Council theme, and we can each do our own parts by personally committing to a safer, greener, and more resilient future for ourselves and future generations.

Thank you.