



**Keynote address by the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 2020 ATAG Global Sustainable Aviation Forum**

(Virtual Meeting, 29 September 2020)

Dear participants in the 2020 ATAG Global Sustainable Aviation Forum,

dear friends, we are living through an important turning point for aviation today.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on local and global air connectivity, and on the many countries and operators who made that connectivity possible.

It has also tragically impacted the lives of the hundreds of millions of economically vulnerable men and women around the world, many of them people who depend on aviation and tourism for their very livelihoods.

In appreciating that global connectivity and tourism are so fundamental to intercultural understanding, and to the peace and economic prosperity of communities all over the world, United Nations Secretary General Guterres recently went so far as to categorize this international mobility and development dynamic as a ‘wonder of our world’ in its own right.

Given the importance of air travel to such fundamental collective aspirations, and to global citizen’s quality of life, aviation leaders have a great responsibility upon them today as we confront the existential threats of the ongoing pandemic.

Health and safety, and the fundamental economic viability of operators must be assured, and as medical conditions permit, we must also work better together to see that traffic recovery proceeds on the basis of continuously improving international alignment.

But we must also recognize the opportunity this crisis provides to build back commercial aviation greener, and more sustainably, and in terms of its overall role in the social and climate impacts of international travel and tourism.

This outcome, however, will require the vision and strong commitment of everyone attending this ATAG Forum today, and a heavy reliance on innovation going forward.

ICAO is placing a strong focus on innovation Organization-wide today, and we explored some green aviation innovations at the CO₂ Emissions Stocktaking event we conducted earlier this month.

I was very much encouraged to see the level of excitement on hand there for what could be possible for our sector going forward, and particularly so by the announcement there by the oneworld alliance on its new commitment to net-zero emissions by 2050.

This emissions stocktaking process is feeding into ICAO’s exploration of the feasibility for a long-term sectoral emissions goal, as requested by our last Assembly.

Alongside the ICAO Seminar on Aviation Green Recovery, this November, these latest events are also providing a platform for discussion on how we can help assure a greener recovery for air transport, and a better-defined path to its decarbonization.

The insights and perspectives presented here, in this ATAG forum, will play an important part in where those discussions lead to.

It's also important to recall, where aviation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are concerned, that the inter-relationships between aviation, tourism, and the natural environment and civil societies are complex and symbiotic. They are not simply a matter of carbon emissions from commercial jets.

In concluding, please let me assure you that the ICAO Council and Secretariat will continue to move forward on the key objectives of the Environmental work programme States have assigned us, and on tackling even the most challenging aspects of the pandemic's impacts on that programme – as the Council recently achieved with the CORSIA baseline adjustments.

All of us must recognize today that this is a time not only for strong leadership and commitment, but also deeper collaboration and progress founded in the solidarity called for in the Council's CART Report.

Fortunately, there is no other global community more capable in those capacities than our own.

Thank you.