



**Keynote remarks
by the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) Board of Directors Meeting**

(Virtual Event, 19 May 2021)

Let me please begin by thanking Mr. Eric Fanning for the kind invitation to participate in this Board of Governors session of the Aerospace Industries Association.

I cannot start this brief address without recalling where air transport now stands in the midst of the pandemic.

ICAO's analysis reveals that global passenger traffic in 2020 fell drastically by 60% or 2.7 billion, compared with 4.5 billion in 2019. This brings global air travel totals back to 2003 levels.

Resulting from the plunge in air traffic by 60 percent, airlines' financial losses of passenger revenues is estimated to reach USD 370 billion for year 2020, compared to 2019. Airports and ANSPs are estimated to have lost USD 115 billion and USD 13 billion, respectively.

As you know, the ICAO Council reacted immediately to the WHO's declaration of a global pandemic by establishing the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force, or CART and has adopted a series of recommendations for Member States and Industry aimed at supporting air transport recovery.

The inputs of the aerospace and manufacturing sector, through ICCAIA, have been instrumental to the outcomes of the CART.

The third phase of the CART's recommendations was approved by the Council earlier this year. These recommendations established new and amended guidance on public health travel corridors, the safety and efficiency of global vaccine distribution, the facilitation of all-cargo services, and standardized COVID-19 testing certificates for secure international use.

Additionally, and more important, the Council continuous to encourage encouraged governments to advocate more vigorously for air transport public health and economic priorities. One of the recommendation CART Phase III is aligned with the latest WHO advice that "Vaccination should not be a prerequisite for international travel." However, we are working very closely with WHO on standardization and inter-operability of new travel documents, notably in regard to Visible Digital Seals, which may potentially be involved in some international vaccine passport authentication trials later this summer.

ICAO, recognizing that aviation must be an important consideration for every level of government in this challenging economic environment, is working constantly to underscore this to States as we help them to align their global and regional response and recovery efforts.

As I mentioned just a few moments ago, we are back to 2003 levels in terms of global seat capacity. We are currently projecting an overall global reduction in passengers of between forty and fifty percent for 2021.

ICAO expects improvement in the global picture from the third quarter of 2021, though this will largely depend on the effectiveness of pandemic management and vaccination roll out.

Some encouraging signs of recovery for international traffic have begun to emerge more recently, including several established air travel corridors , but admittedly, these attempts are still being hampered at times by the unpredictable health factors globally which remain in play.

Public health remains the overriding priority for civil societies, and therefore for the governments which cooperate through ICAO, but please rest assured that the critical role played by air transport in crisis response and recovery is also being continuously and very strongly emphasized.

ICAO and its Member States clearly recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health crisis – it is also an economic and financial crisis, and one which presents governments with very difficult trade-offs in terms of the health, economic, and social priorities concerned.

These issues and others will be key priorities for governments at ICAO for some time to come. For this reason we will convene a High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) for this October.

The High-Level Conference this October will address economic recovery priorities and will seek to formalize new and stronger national commitments to assure support to recovery.

With regard to the work of CART, I wish to take this opportunity to not just thank the aerospace industries for the great contribution provided to ICAO, but also to emphasize the new and more modern cooperative relationship that we are establishing.

This leads me to an important issue that I wish to mention: innovation. ICAO is acutely aware of how important innovation will be to aviation recovery and sustainability in the pandemic's aftermath. Similarly, ICAO is also aware that itself must evolve to keep pace with the Industry.

The acceleration of effective standardization, regulation and guidelines is a priority for the coming years, so that the benefits of the numerous innovations concepts can be realized as quickly as possible for benefit of civil society and industry.

In this regard, ICAO needs to know as early as possible the emerging needs of Industry and the direction it is taking.

Cooperation between ICAO and Industry is already in place, I would say effectively, at technical level. We need a closer cooperation and coordination at strategic level. For this reason, we have decided to establish a High Level Consultative Forum with Industry that will provide us with strategic indications on Industry needs for the forthcoming years and I am very glad to recall that the first meeting of this forum will be held on 29-30 June 2021.

Amongst the several priorities, CO₂ emissions reduction is the utmost priority.

We are very pleased to see that several States and airlines, or airline alliances, have set ambitious CO₂ reduction goals for the coming decades. This will require a huge contribution of the manufacturers.

The many innovations you are already helping to realize in renewable energy sources and new types of airframes and propulsion will play a key role in helping our sector pursue its CO₂ reduction goals.

They will also be key priorities for governments and ICAO, and therefore I expect governments to arrive at the 42nd Assembly next year with clear expectations on what these health and environmental sustainability innovations will need to deliver, and how the ICAO work programme will need to be tailored to aid that delivery.

In closing, please let me re-emphasize how much ICAO appreciates the already well-established innovation and safety commitments of the aerospace community. We very much look forward to the discussions ahead today on the course we need to set for our sector's more prosperous future.

ICAO has been proud to fulfil its important multilateral and global coordination role during these challenging times, and we will continue our efforts in cooperation with the AIA and other stakeholders to ensure a safe, harmonized and sustainable recovery for global air transport.

Thank you.