



**Keynote remarks
by the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) Board Members**

(Virtual Event, 15 June 2021)

Let me please begin by thanking Mr. Alessandro Profumo for the kind invitation to participate in this latest ASD Board session.

I cannot start this brief address without taking stock of 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 the year 2020, compared to 2019. Airports and ANSPs are estimated to have lost USD 115 billion and USD 13 billion, respectively.

The impact of the pandemic on air travel will still be deeply felt in 2021. ICAO's latest near-term projection indicates that for this year as a whole, global passengers will remain at around 45% below the 2019 levels and will return to 2019 levels only in 2023 or 2024.

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 importantly, the Council continues to encourage governments to advocate more vigorously for air transport public health and economic priorities. One of the recommendations of 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. In fact one of the challenges to be faced very soon is the international vaccine passport authentication. ICAO has recently developed a technical standard

that should ensure full interoperability. In substance, the system should work in a way similar to the e-passport mechanisms.

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) this October.

Alongside safety and facilitation matters, the High-Level Conference 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 their great contribution 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 it 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 innovation concepts can be realized as quickly as possible.

In this regard, ICAO must have an early awareness of 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 the technical level, but we need closer cooperation and coordination at the 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 coming years. The first meeting of this forum will be held on 29 and 30 June 2021.

Amongst the several priorities, CO₂ emissions reduction is an utmost concern for us all, and during the pandemic we've seen the sector double its efforts to shift the current crisis into an opportunity to accelerate the decarbonisation of aviation.

States continues to pursue a basket of measures to address environmental priorities through ICAO, including technology, operations, sustainable aviation fuels, and market-based measures (CORSIA). They are also exploring a new long-term aspirational goal for governments to work toward.

ICAO is assisting these efforts by conducting seminars to take regular stock of which innovations are providing what types of benefits, and to bring more players together around common objectives under a Global Coalition for Sustainable Aviation.

We've noted the increased momentum of both States and industry in this area, including some ambitious net zero CO₂ reduction goals for the coming decades which will require tremendous innovation on behalf of aircraft designers and manufacturers.

Indeed, 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.

These will also be key priorities for governments and ICAO, and therefore I expect governments to arrive at the 41st Session of the 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.

Similarly, other innovative technologies and solutions are at the forefront of discussions at ICAO, including the progressive digitalization of operations, blockchain applications and big data and of course the integration of unmanned aerial vehicles into our common airspace, among many others.

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

Thank you.