



ICAO

**Remarks  
by the Council President of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,  
to the Hermes Air Transport event on**

**The African Air Transport sector in the post COVID-19 era:  
*Resilience and Efficiency through Leadership and Cooperation***

*(Virtual Event, 1 July 2021)*

*Former Council President of ICAO, Mr. Benard Aliu,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Please let me begin today by offering my thanks and appreciation to Dr. Kostas Iatrou, Hermes Director General, and to Professor Andreas Papatheodorou and the University of the Aegean, for making possible this important interaction on the African air transport sector in the post COVID-19 era.

ICAO's latest economic impact analysis reveals that global seat capacity offered by airlines in 2020 closed-out 50 per cent lower than 2019 levels, and that the number of passengers fell by 60 per cent or 2.7 billion.

This brought passenger traffic back to 2003 levels, and the effects here in Africa were even more severe with capacity reduced by 58 per cent and passenger numbers down by 68 per cent.

Freight volumes also declined as overall economic activity was reduced, but the number of all-freight aircraft movements increased, and many passenger aircraft were converted to help address this increased demand.

Since July of last year, all-freighter aircraft activity in Africa has surpassed 2019 levels, highlighting the critical role being played by air cargo to carry food, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment to where the world needs them most.

The precipitous decline in air traffic has created severe liquidity strain for all aviation stakeholders globally, including major operators such as airlines, airports, and air navigation service providers (ANSPs), in addition to aerospace manufacturers and other supply and service companies throughout the air transport value chain.

According to ICAO estimates, airline gross operating revenues globally have plummeted by 371 billion dollars as a result, with the airport and ANSP communities losing another 115 billion and 13 billion dollars, respectively.

African air transport contractions are estimated to have resulted in a continent-wide 14 billion dollar loss in airline operating revenues, and 2.8 and 0.6 billion dollar losses for AFI airports and ANSPs.

As we continue to respond to what 2021 has presented with, it's clear that pandemic resurgence and related shutdowns have mainly halted the air travel recovery globally.

ICAO's near-term projections, as of early June, indicate that for 2021 in its entirety the number of passengers globally will decline by between 43 and 49 per cent compared to 2019. This will translate into likely losses of between 286 and 322 billion in gross passenger operating revenues for airlines.

For Africa, meanwhile, the total number of passengers this year is expected to be 46 to 54 percent lower than 2019 levels, resulting in 10 to 12 billion dollars in lost airline passenger revenues.

This significant deterioration of the economic viability of the aviation sector affects the balance and composition of the entire aviation ecosystem. This will likely have far-reaching repercussions across the broader economy, and it is therefore an urgent priority that aviation companies take whatever measures available to bolster their financial positions and mitigate these negative impacts.

It is equally important that States take appropriate and coordinated actions to stabilize and support their aviation industries, and beyond simply their airlines and airports, if we're to ensure that aviation can continue its pivotal role in providing connectivity, driving national prosperity and job growth, and enable the broader the economic recoveries which governments must address.

Acknowledging that there is no 'one-size fits-all' solution to these challenges, ICAO has also developed new guidance on the Economic and Financial Measures which can potentially help States and industry to cope with the economic fallout of the pandemic.

To address the future of the aviation industry, ICAO will convene a High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021) in October 2021. The Conference will consider short- and long-term implications engendered by the crisis, proposals for States to use in tackling safety, operational and economic challenges, and streamlined policy responses to post-pandemic state of aviation. It will also provide an opportunity to share experiences among States and industry, and strengthen and demonstrate multilateral cooperation, States' individual and collective engagements.

The route from these unprecedented and turbulent skies needs to be coined by maximum possible harmonization, efficient exchange of information and a clear common vision. I am sincerely encouraged to see the determined efforts across the industry and across the world coming together to set and keep aviation on the path of restart and recovery. As the President of the ICAO Council, I am honored to say that the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) works relentlessly on providing Member States and the industry with principles and recommendations for a safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the industry. In addition to its latest report and guidance released in March 2021, it is now also on the course to shed more clarity on the issue of validation of test results and vaccine certificates from the perspective of the aviation industry.

Thank you.