



**Remarks by the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 56th Session of the Eurocontrol Provisional Council**

(Brussels, Belgium, 25 November 2021)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are all well aware of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on aviation and therefore I will not go into detail here today on data and forecasts. Rather, I wish to begin by thanking each of you, in your different roles as Director General of Civil Aviation or through EUROCONTROL, ECAC or the European Union, for the support provided to ICAO's work, and particularly to the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), dedicated to restoring our sector.

As you know, these efforts recently culminated into outcomes of the High Level Conference on COVID-19. ICAO considers these outcomes a success. The level of participation was truly impressive.

The Conference was attended by 1784 participants from 129 Member States and 38 invited international organizations. Amongst them, 56 Ministers and Deputy Ministers. These figures give a clear indication of interest and expectations by ICAO States and, more generally, by the Aviation Community.

Of course, more important than the participation figures are the outcomes of the Conference. We are fully convinced that the final Ministerial Declaration, notwithstanding some compromises needed in order to achieve consensus, will pave the way for aviation recovery and resilience.

While the Declaration is not a legally binding document, it demonstrates the solidarity and determination, and conveys a strong political "message" to international communities and world economies. As the first follow-up action, the Ministerial Declaration was disseminated to Member States and international organizations through a State letter.

The key elements of the Declaration will be reflected in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Implementation Centre (CRRIC) so that each State can easily refer to the relevant provision of the Declaration and the related CART recommendations and guidance.

In addition, continued efforts will be made to promote and raise awareness of the Declaration through dedicated webinars on the outcomes of the Conference and at various ICAO events. Additionally, myself and the Secretary General will take every possible opportunity, including this address here today, to recommend to Member States that they adhere as much as possible to the commitments contained in the Ministerial Declaration and to continue to work for harmonization of measures.

As you know, the High Level Conference was not characterized solely by the Ministerial Plenary. There were two important Streams: Safety and Facilitation. The work was very productive with

the outcome of approximately 200 recommendations, partially directed to States and partially to ICAO. Those directed to ICAO will be incorporated in the ICAO Business Plan along with appropriate priorities and, of course, in the framework of the existing and forthcoming budget.

I mentioned before the important European contribution to ICAO's work in response to COVID-19. In that regard, I wish to acknowledge Eurocontrol's continuous contributions to ICAO's efforts during the pandemic, including, but certainly not limited to, its support and in some cases leadership of related ICAO activities, panels, and implementation activities. In addition, the European data being provided is helping ICAO develop a much more detailed understanding of crisis evolution.

There is much that has been done which has worked very well, and we have seen excellent levels of cooperation from all stakeholders, which is greatly encouraging.

The post-pandemic scenario requires all of us to think differently from the past, when the aviation sector was growing at a quite steady pace. One key element is the focus on innovation.

Fortunately, the pace of aviation innovation pre-pandemic had already led to some important Council and Assembly prioritization toward re-thinking how ICAO works, and from some fundamental standpoints.

One important first step in this process is the establishment of the Council's Industry Consultative Forum where Council Representatives and CEOs from all across the sector have the opportunity to exchange views at the strategic level, helping the Council to identify new priorities focused on innovation.

The first Consultative Forum held last June was focused on horizon scanning on innovation and Industry priorities. In order to support innovation, ICAO will have to consider steps to review the organization's Standard-making procedures, enhance ICAO's interactions with innovators, and address the standard-making process more efficiently through the development of a comprehensive innovation roadmap.

Our objective with all of these endeavours is to align the organization's efforts and much needed evolution with the needs of States and industry in mind. We will also undertake a new independent assessment of how we interface with innovation and innovators to better assess where things stand, and how they must evolve.

During its recently concluded 224th Session, the Council made good progress towards the adoption of an ICAO Innovation policy, or policies, in view of reporting to the 41st Assembly the actions implemented in accordance with Assembly Resolution A40-27.

In particular, the Council decided to focus the next Industry Consultative Forum in the first semester of 2022 on Sustainable Aviation Fuels. This interaction with Industry CEOs will remain at the strategic level and will not overlap other important discussions within CAEP or held in the context of ICAO Stocktaking events.

This brings me to ICAO's current work on Environment, and in particular, on Climate Change. Let me begin by mentioning an important innovation that the Council has introduced to its working methods. I refer to the establishment of the Climate and Environment Committee. The establishment of this Committee has brought immediate positive effects on the Council decision-making process.

In fact, in the past the Advisory Group on CORSIA had a very limited composition of Council Representatives and had to deal only with CORSIA related matters. Consequently, many discussions held in the AGC were repeated in the Council. Additionally, topics outside the competence of AGC, for example the Long Term Aspirational Goal, were discussed directly in Council without a proper pre-meeting preparation and screening.

The effects of the establishment of this new Committee, open to all Council Representatives, has greatly facilitated the Council decision making process. For example, at the conclusion of in-depth discussions in the Committee, the Council was able to adopt, two weeks ago, the new Sustainability Criteria for CORSIA eligible Sustainable Aviation Fuels. This is a very important decision, taken after one year of exhaustive discussions that is sure to incentivize the use of SAFs in the aviation sector.

Other difficult discussions on climate change that will be held in the Council in the coming months are the 2022 CORSIA review and the feasibility study on the global Long Term Aspirational Goal. The ICAO Council has already started these discussions during the 224th session and will continue in its next session. As you may be aware, the preparatory work on a Long Term aspirational Goal will culminate in a High-Level Meeting to be convened from 20-22 July 2022 and whose outcomes will be reconsidered by the Council and then submitted to the 41st Assembly.

I mentioned “difficult discussions”. In fact, perspectives of ICAO Member States are sometimes split and it is important to bring the Council to converge on consensual decisions also in order to facilitate discussions at the next Assembly. For this reason, I invite Member States to show flexibility on these difficult subjects as aviation needs to progress in its fight against climate change and ICAO must show its leadership in this matter.

The pandemic has also reinforced our longstanding appreciation in global aviation that solidarity and regional cooperation are essential to our common success.

There is a need for efficient regional cooperation mechanisms to tackle major events affecting air transportation at both the technical and political level, and regardless of whether they are safety, security, or environment related.

Enhanced effectiveness can be achieved through existing regional mechanisms and this is especially relevant to improving crisis coordination planning and preparedness.

I would appreciate and highlight in this context how Eurocontrol’s European Aviation Crisis Coordination Cell has provided a model example of effective regional crisis preparedness and response coordination.

Looking ahead, cooperation and alignment will remain very critical. I wish to highlight in this context the successful European implementation of the harmonized approaches outlined in the joint EASA and ECDC health safety protocol, in addition to the successful rollout of the EU travel certification. In this latter regard, I hope that full interoperability would soon be achieved with the ICAO VDS.

For the next triennium, and once we have managed the complex recovery path back to full traffic and full ICAO compliance, we should prioritize the evolution of aviation safety into structural and system-wide capability to manage risk in an intensely collaborative and resource-shared environment.

The strategic approach to this will be to have core activities identified in key areas of standardization such as air navigation services, personnel licensing, and aircraft operations, among others,

and to strengthen the role of regional cooperation in all aspects of aviation risk management and Global Plan performance achievement.

We must also of course stay very focused and agile in the face of all emerging issues and technologies, whether relating to digitalization and cybersecurity, drones, high airspace operations, or GNSS resilience.

In concluding today, I wish to thank Eurocontrol for the offer to host and develop the LADR Location of an Aircraft in Distress Repository, and appreciate the high value assistance and leadership ICAO benefits from through the secondment of Eurocontrol senior personnel.

We also benefit immensely from your collaboration in areas such as global ASBU monitoring, civil/military cooperation, AIM, SWIM and MET joint activities and exercises, and many other areas of regional and global pursuit.

ICAO appreciates this collaboration which is a model for other international organizations.

I wish to thank you for your attention and let me reiterate my appreciation for the invitation and giving me the opportunity to share my views with you today.

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