



**Keynote address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 2022 Changi Aviation Summit**

(Singapore, 17 May 2022)

Your excellency Minister S. Iswaran,
Honorable Ministers,
Authorities,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is wonderful to be here in Singapore this week, and I wish to begin today by expressing my sincere gratitude to His Excellency S. Iswaran, Singapore's Minister for Transport and Trade Relations, for the very kind invitation to join such an illustrious range of participants at this year's Changi Aviation Summit.

As we begin this summit, I wish to share with you my sense of personal satisfaction and excitement to be meeting here today for what should have been my very first mission as President of the ICAO Council in early 2020. As you know, this was the first major event to be cancelled in the early days of the pandemic. The fact that we're here together and in person today is a very positive sign confirming that we are recovering from this COVID-19 era. It is also a welcome indicator of much more optimistic horizons ahead for global aviation.

In fact, while international aviation continues to face many challenges due to the pandemic, it is recovering and continues to connect our world when and where societies need it most.

Our current forecast is a global traffic level corresponding to 75% of 2019 traffic levels by the end of 2022. However, we are pleased to see that some regions, notably Europe and Latin America, will reach 90% by the end of 2022.

Air transport is, and will continue to be, an essential catalyst for global economic recovery, contributing to many of the United Nations *Sustainable Development Goals*. These same contributions will help to assure that countries can achieve success with the United Nations *Sustainable Development Goals* by 2030.

The recent improvements in air travel demand are largely driven by the alleviation of travel and border restrictions in many parts of the world.

However, the road to recovery and resilience remains a complex one, and it creates a variety of key challenges and leaves us with a certain number of lessons learned.

First and foremost is the ‘disharmonized’ action undertaken by governments despite ICAO’s recommendations through its Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART).

The extent of this impact underscores why it is vital for governments to take coordinated actions to stabilize and support the sector, should such a situation occur again in the future.

It is imperative that as we now work to restore traffic growth, we also work to aggressively decrease air transport emissions.

UN Secretary General Guterres has called for all means of transport to realize net-zero emissions by 2050, and the aviation industry has recently answered his call with aggressive targets.

With jets today already producing 80% fewer emissions than the first to enter service, it can be said that the aerospace sector has already innovated and progressed air transport very far along this journey.

Nevertheless, we must accelerate the decarbonisation process dramatically. And while technology will continue to play a fundamental role, the key player in the near term will be the extensive use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), supported by more efficient operations and flow management, and the global offsetting being managed under CORSIA.

States are poised to discuss their Long Term Aspirational Goal for aviation emissions at our 41st Assembly this fall, and we look forward to very high levels of environmental ambition.

It is essential that a global framework for civil aviation decarbonisation be established in order to help States and private entities to invest with a proper perspective. For this reason, the decision to be taken by the ICAO Assembly at its 41st Session is so critical.

In the near future, it will also be important to identify opportunities for States for enhanced liberalization with a more modern use of traffic rights, particularly in the cargo sector, as well as easier accessibility to the aviation market.

From a medical standpoint, resilience will mean a fully digital and contactless passenger experience being realized by airline and airport operators. I refer to the integration of digital passenger biometric data used for security, medical status, and border control systems overseen by governments. In this regard, I wish to underline that ICAO has adopted technical standards to support a contactless journey.

Taken together, these combined challenges help to explain why “innovation” and “resilience” are the key themes we have identified to motivate States at this year’s Assembly.

It will also need to reflect on ways to assure digital capability and capacity amongst all states and stakeholders so that no countries are left behind as this wave continues to transform international aviation.

In closing today, ladies and gentlemen, I would highlight the Council and Secretariat’s current and very critical efforts to transform and rejuvenate the Organization to meet the challenges of today and those of tomorrow. Our objective is to modernize ICAO in order to keep pace with innovation, for example with urban mobility or space transport, and to be ready to face unexpected challenges.

ICAO is fully committed to supporting the development of international air transport in the same spirit and in line with the same principles laid out in the Chicago Convention some 78 years ago yet, at the same time, ICAO remains mindful of the need for innovative and agile approaches required by modern economies that depend on aviation more than ever before.

Thank you.