



**Keynote remarks by
the President of the ICAO Council,
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 2022 ITF Civil Aviation Section Conference**

(Montreal, Canada, 6 September 2022)

Good afternoon to all of you participating in the 2022 ITF Civil Aviation Section Conference.

Please let me begin today by thanking the ITF's Civil Aviation Section Secretary, Mr. Gabriel Mocho Rodriguez, for the very kind invitation to contribute to your discussions here today.

ICAO is very appreciative of the important role which the ITF plays as the international trade federation of transport workers' unions, and I wish to recognize its many contributions to the work achieved through our own Organization, as well as other UN bodies associated with transport worker safety and employment conditions, such as the International Labor and Maritime Organizations (ILO/IMO).

The fact that this federation has been an official observer to ICAO Assemblies for some 50 years now speaks to the vitality and relevance of our many collaborations. One such area of collaboration is cabin safety. ITF plays a very active role in the ICAO Cabin Safety Group, a joint industry-regulatory group that brings together cabin safety experts from States, airlines, and international organizations. Through its involvement, ITF has contributed to the development of ICAO's efforts to combat trafficking in persons in aviation, among other areas of collaboration. You will hear more from ICAO experts during the course of this conference.

With air travel demand having rebounded much more quickly than expected, the aviation industry has faced the challenge of shortage of aviation professionals. Ironically, pilot surpluses have quickly flipped to become deficits.

Particular challenges have beset airport operators and ground handling and maintenance companies, not to mention national governments in their efforts to re-staff aviation security and regulatory personnel.

This is truly a global challenge, more remarkable in regions where air transport is recovering faster.

As surely you know, ICAO has been very reactive to COVID- 19 and is continuing to very actively address all response and recovery priorities for international civil aviation globally. In this regard, it was my honour very recently to accept the inaugural Flight Safety Foundation Richard Teller Crane Founder's Award on behalf of ICAO, in recognition of the global results collectively achieved through the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART).

With respect to our latest recovery indicators at the global level, ICAO's analyses reveal clear signs of encouraging growth.

The number of passengers carried from January to April of this year increased by 65% compared to the same period in 2021, while aircraft departures increased by 30%.

Airline seat capacity grew by 32% during the same period, and with continuing supportive conditions for travel demand, we are now projecting a stronger overall recovery this year compared to last.

What these figures explain to us that many of the air transport network's current global challenges are due to excess-demand – but not in very short timeframes.

This tells us for example that the pandemic has had little long- term impact on the desire of world populations and businesses to travel and connect internationally, and reinforces that only greater success and prosperity await us as we continue to adapt and reconnect the world.

It also makes clear that the outcomes of the 41st Session of the Assembly, which will be held here in Montréal from 27 September to 7 October, will be critical to augmenting our current recovery momentum, in addition to assuring that ICAO is better fit for purpose to play its part.

As part of our overall pandemic response activities, ICAO has developed new *Guidance on Economic and Financial Measures*.

In a world of complex supply chains, and one where international tourist flows are becoming more and more relevant to national economic outcomes, our provisions in this area stress that aviation companies need to take bold and immediate steps to bolster their financial positions.

They also importantly highlight that governments need to take appropriate and coordinated actions to stabilize and support their air transport sectors, and that all related policies and incentives include clear protections for aviation workers for the short-term, and robust workforce retention measures for the long-term.

We hear a great deal today about the 'new normal' that the global pandemic has confronted us with, and I'd suggest that the very significant changes seen in the relationship between employer and employee have presented some of the most acute and widespread examples of how our world has changed.

COVID-19 first brought us the Great Resignation, as workers nearing the end of their careers fundamentally re-evaluated their work-life balances and circumstances.

More recently we are seeing growing trends in terms of work-to-rule approaches or so-called ‘quiet quitting’, as workers seek more of the dignity and fairness they expect when contributing to a company or organization’s success and profitability.

These trends and others emphasize the importance of improving the quantity and quality of engagement opportunities between management and their workforces, and of the role of organizations such as ICAO and the ITF to help drive the new consensus which needs to emerge in terms of the global civil aviation workforce and the many operators and governments it serves.

The upcoming ICAO Assembly has made ‘Innovation’ and ‘Resilience’ its key themes, with a very prominent focus on future sustainability imperative to each.

Innovation is critical for example to how air transport will succeed at reconnecting the world in the coming years while simultaneously decreasing its emissions, and to how it can accelerate the digitalization of the passenger experience to meet the expectations of future travelers for a healthy and secure airport and aircraft environment, and far more convenient security and customs processes.

Resilience sustainability meanwhile speaks not only to aviation’s ability to withstand future global public health threats, but to all of the social and economic factors which will help to assure economically viable air transport companies, and healthy and happy air transport workers.

Going forward, greater recognition must be pursued on the specific needs of aircrew and air transport personnel in the mitigation of health risks, especially in consideration of how critical aviation supply chains demonstrated themselves to be when the world was in the midst of an unprecedented crisis.

At the height of those impacts, ICAO was proud to collaborate with numerous UN organizations in issuing a series of joint statements recognizing transport personnel as key workers, requiring unique rights and freedoms in terms of their international mobility and health assurances.

We are very actively continuing this work today, both with these same UN agencies and international industry representatives. This work is being undertaken as part of the Joint Action Group which is specifically reviewing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world’s transport workers and the global supply chain.

Before closing, I wish to mention an important topic that will be discussed and hopefully decided by the ICAO Assembly. I refer to the contribution of aviation to the fight against climate change through the establishment of a long-term aspirational goal of net-zero CO₂ emission by 2050. It is a global goal that will be implemented by States and/or Regions at their own pace but with the objective to decarbonize globally civil aviation by 2050. In this regard, Sustainable Aviation Fuels will play a fundamental role and ICAO is fully engaged to promote investments in production of SAFs in order to make them more accessible and more affordable.

We look forward to further discussion and outcomes on these matters at the upcoming 41st ICAO Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.