



**Speech by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
at the UNFCCC COP27
High-level Round Table**

(Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 7 November 2022)

*Your Excellencies,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am deeply honoured to have the opportunity to address this distinguished roundtable today on behalf of ICAO, the United Nations agency supporting a safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation system.

Air transport is an important sector with respect to current international efforts to address humanity's impacts on the global climate.

Aircraft connect and serve societies and businesses all over the world, redistribute wealth from developed to developing nations through tourism and trade, and play a critical role in helping humanity to remain agile and responsive in times of disaster and crisis, as the recent global pandemic has so clearly illustrated.

A dilemma we face today in aviation, however, is that even as the benefits of international mobility help to bring us together, and support key progress by many States toward their achievement of the *Agenda 2030* Sustainable Development Goals, that very same air connectivity which is so beneficial to humanity is generating emissions which are anything but beneficial to our planet and its ecosystems.

The recent IPCC 6th Assessment Report has highlighted for everyone the urgency of reducing anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. The States who collaborate through ICAO have not been deaf to these warnings, and with the advice and support of the ICAO Secretariat and its expert groups, alongside insights from industry and civil society groups, governments have now adopted a NetZero 2050 target for powered flight in support of the Paris Agreement temperature goal.

This goal, which was arrived at just last month at the conclusion of our 41st ICAO Assembly, is to be achieved collectively without attribution of specific responsibilities to individual States.

One of the key features of the agreement is the recognition that each State's special circumstances and respective capabilities will inform each State's ability to contribute, and within its own national timeframe.

To reduce the impacts of aviation on the global climate, States, the industry, and all other relevant stakeholders, have been pursuing a basket of CO₂ reduction measures through ICAO for many years now.

This is part of the reason that modern aircraft are 70% quieter and 80% more fuel-efficient than their early predecessors, but at the same time we must now look to the introduction of radical, disruptive, and in many cases revolutionary innovations in technologies and operations to deliver the overall decarbonization now required to keep global temperatures in check.

Achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 will also require substantial and sustained investment and financing over the coming decades, and we must furthermore assure reliable and affordable support and capacity-building for the many developing countries and States with particular needs who will be depending on it to help play their part.

An important part of my message to you here today is that the work to begin addressing these objectives for our sector has already started.

This past June, for example, ICAO launched its Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (ACT-SAF) programme, which will provide tailored support to States on sustainable fuel development and deployment, and facilitate related partnerships and cooperation around the world.

Forty-five States and 12 international organizations are already very actively involved in the programme, which recognizes the key role to be played in this endeavour by sustainable fuels, and we expect many more States and organizations to join in the coming months.

While this new NetZero2050 long-term commitment is essential to help realize the dependable investment and policy environment needed in support of the decarbonization of aviation, it must not overshadow the urgent need for all industries and sectors to act now.

ICAO Member States and the industry will therefore continue to pursue additional medium-term sustainability objectives, notably through the expanded use of sustainable aviation fuels, and via the ongoing implementation of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or 'CORSIA', the global market based measures which countries adopted at ICAO in 2016.

A total of 97% of global international aviation CO₂ emissions are now being reported on by States under CORSIA, and our 41st Assembly put new safeguards in place to guarantee its continued and successful implementation, while reaffirming its integrity and environmental ambition.

ICAO is fully cognizant of its global responsibilities towards the sustainable future of the international aviation sector and of the planet.

We also remain deeply cognizant of the critical importance of international air connectivity to the civil societies and economies of Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Least Developed Countries.

As aviation continues to explore and adopt the incredible new technological innovations arising today in aeronautics and renewable energy propulsion, we also recognize how imperative it is to start putting in place the right policies, legal frameworks and modernized infrastructure to enable this evolution to emissions-free flight.

This transition, fueled by frontier technologies and featuring many new entrants to the aviation ecosystem, holds tremendous economic potential for developing States.

We are greatly encouraged at ICAO that it can also help establish a more level playing field toward an inclusive and effective global green transition in aviation in the coming decades, and we will be proud to leverage our 78 year history of driving international consensus and progress in air transport to assure that this is realized.

Thank you for your attention.