



## Transformation and solidarity key to post-pandemic recovery, ICAO tells tourism Crisis Committee

For immediate release

**Montréal, 9 April 2021** – Speaking to the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee and Commission for the Middle East yesterday, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu noted that ongoing pandemic impacts on international mobility reveal that the world is “back to 2003 levels in terms of global seat capacity.”

“Here in the Middle East, passenger totals dropped by over 70% and recovery in general is proceeding more slowly than in some other areas of the world, mainly due to the high levels of international passenger movements here,” Dr. Liu emphasized.

Stressing that the precipitous decline in air traffic continues to present severe liquidity strains to companies and suppliers throughout the air transport and tourism value chains, the ICAO Secretary General identified three key priorities for the global industry sector recently endorsed by the ICAO Council’s Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART).

The first she drew attention to was the establishment of national and regional risk management strategies to gradually open air routes based on mutually recognized public health measures.

“Success here will heavily rely on national decision-makers taking fuller account of air transport’s role as an enabler and multiplier of economic recovery,” she noted, “and ICAO continues to raise global awareness on this point.”

The second area of priority Dr. Liu highlighted was the possibly profound long-term implications for traditional air transport business models and operations post pandemic.

“Industry structure, market demand, and customer expectations will all be impacted, and each of these in turn could lead to new approaches to operations, network and fleet management, and product design and pricing,” she commented. “Given that over 50% of cross-border travellers formerly arrived by air pre-pandemic, the implications for tourism markets in light of these significant evolutions in air transport could be profound.”

Another of the serious implications for the sector which Dr. Liu stressed was the advancing digital evolution in many air transport systems and processes, noting this will only accelerate as governments and industry confront expectations for passenger health screening and globally-interoperable digital health credentials.

The third key area Dr. Liu identified was the priority for the aviation and tourism sectors to learn together from COVID-19 to improve overall air transport crisis preparedness, enhance economic and environmental sustainability, and enable smarter operations.

She noted ICAO will be convening a High-Level Conference on COVID-19 this coming October, and encouraged strong engagement from travel and tourism leaders and stakeholders at the event.



## Resources for Editors

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially-recognized air transport stakeholders.

[ICAO's COVID-19 Portal](#)

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