



Future of aviation security focus of AVSEC2021 and 9/11 commemoration

For immediate release

Montréal, 15 September 2021 – World leading aviation security and counter-terrorism experts exchanged views and expertise at the ICAO Global Aviation Security Symposium 2021 (AVSEC2021) last week, providing a crucial forum for an international exchange on means to mitigate evolving threats to the international civil aviation network as the system begins its COVID-19 recovery.

The three-day event was a unique occasion to take stock of the opportunities and challenges inherent in carrying on or resuming operations in the midst of a global pandemic, where health measures have become a critical piece of the aviation puzzle.

Discussions focused on a broad array of challenges to keep employees and passengers safe, mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and respond to dramatic shifts in air travel demand, all while maintaining the appropriate levels of security and facing new challenges of a reduced workforce and financial constraints. Panellists provided unique insights into means to enhance the resilience of aviation security operations moving forward, including through the illustration of ways to foster innovation that is efficient and effective, from human, operational and financial perspectives.

The event concluded with a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and reflected on how aviation security has strengthened over the last two decades and discussed how lessons learnt address major challenges in aviation security. It was also an opportunity to reaffirm the international responsibility towards passengers, and to remember why it is so important to persist in making security the cornerstone of the aviation sector. The proceedings underlined the joint effort undertaken by all stakeholders that allowed for a great upgrade of existing security measures at the time, setting the grounds for a more robust and consistent global aviation security system.

“The 9/11 terrorist attacks had a tremendous impact on the security of our society and dramatically altered the international security landscape. It imposed permanent change to aviation security,” remarked ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano. “Staying committed to the actions and goals of the ICAO Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) will be the best assurance for aligning our efforts towards continued enhancement of the security of international air transport.”

“9/11 had a major impact on our world view. For those in aviation it was a stark and shocking moment of reaction and realization. Mindful today of those who lost their lives, we must continue to pledge that all will be done to prevent anything like it from happening again,” remarked ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar. “The pandemic has shown us that we have a great deal of new progress to make in the months and years ahead, and ICAO will be proud to serve as the nexus of multilateralism, and of effective industry cooperation, in support of those important efforts.”

ICAO AVSEC2021 featured wide-ranging high-level panellists including Mr. David Pekoske, Administrator, Transportation Security Administration, United States; Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT); Ms. Michèle Coninx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee

Executive Directorate (CTED), United Nations; Mr. Henrik Hololei, Director-General, Mobility and Transport, European Commission; Mr. Luis Felipe de Oliveira, Director General, Airports Council International (ACI) World; Ms. Poppy Khoza, Director of Civil Aviation, Civil Aviation Authority, South Africa; Ms. Wendy Nixon, Director General, Aviation Security, Transport Canada; Ms. Tatevik Revazyan, Director General, Civil Aviation Authority of the Republic of Armenia; and Mr. Willie Walsh, Director General, International Air Transport Association (IATA).



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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.

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