



Science and strategy key to reconnecting Africa

For immediate release

Montréal and Kigali, 1 December 2021 – Addressing the 33rd Plenary Session of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) in Kigali today, ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano reviewed the means by which the continent’s air transport sector could recovery through the adoption of scientifically informed and strategically aligned aviation and border policy.

The opening three day meeting, which is hosted by the Government of Rwanda, was attended by the President of the Republic of Rwanda, His Excellency Paul Kagame; the Honourable Minister of Infrastructure of Rwanda, Mr. Claver Gatete; and the Honourable Minister of Roads and Air Transport of Togo, Mr. Affoh Atcha-Dedji.

Mr. Sciacchitano highlighted that the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) and the African Union High-level Task Force for Recovery of Aviation in Africa have made tremendous efforts since the onset of COVID-19 to ensure effective, coherent and coordinated response and recovery measures in international air transport, noting that the CART’s recommendations are equally applicable the Omicron COVID-19 variant of concern.

He also pointed to the ministerial declaration resulting from ICAO’s recent High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) which formalized that meeting’s outcomes, providing “an important foundation to build upon and accelerate emerging positive trends for national and global benefit.”

Ministers at the HLCC determined, for example, that while vaccination should not be a precondition for travel, it should be leveraged at every prudent opportunity to safely facilitate international mobility. They also emphasized the need to refine border risk management approaches on the basis of the latest scientific evidence, and highlighted the need to reinforce the global network against future threats.

A further important outcome concerned the need to leverage digital innovations and data sharing to achieve seamless and contactless processes, and to promote more efficient global access to mutually-recognized and ICAO VDS-secured health certifications.

To attain these goals however, countries must abide by their near-term commitments for financial and economic support for their air industries and regulators.

On this point, Mr. Sciacchitano underscored that ICAO and its member States also clearly recognize the need for determined assistance and capacity-building as a key element of all objectives relating to a safe recovery of air transport and building-back better, pursuant to the ICAO Council’s principle of leaving no country behind.

Building back better in Africa will notably require the continuous joint efforts of States and aviation stakeholders to advance the objectives and work undertaken on the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration, in addition to the African Union’s flagship projects to realize the Single African Air Transport Market and African Continental Free Trade Area (SAATM and AfCTA).

It will also be greatly facilitated by States implementation of the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, which permits and encourages States and Regions to modernize by leapfrogging legacy technologies, the ICAO Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan), and the African Aviation Security and Facilitation (AFI SECFAL) Plan.

On these points, the Council President acknowledged the exemplary contributions made by AFCAC and its Member States during the HLCC, and noted the valuable role African Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) they played throughout the COVID crisis.



The Honourable Minister of Infrastructure of Rwanda, Mr. Claver Gatete (left), and the President of the ICAO Council, Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano, at the occasion of the opening of 33rd Plenary Session of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) in Kigali on 1 December 2021. Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Infrastructure of Rwanda.

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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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