



ICAO and UNWTO issue Joint Statement for Aviation Day, call for accelerated efforts to reconnect the world

For immediate release

Montréal, 7 December 2021 – For the first time since International Civil Aviation Day was established, in 1994, ICAO is commemorating 7 December this year with a special Joint Statement with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) calling for accelerated global efforts to reconnect the world.

With global connectivity recovery on course, both UN bodies called for intensified efforts towards vaccine equity and stressed that restrictions on travel due to new variants of COVID-19 must only be used “as a very last resort,” noting they’re “discriminatory, ineffective and against the guidance of the World Health Organization.”

They also underscored that the pandemic has “pressed pause on trillions of dollars’ worth of economic activity, affecting millions of livelihoods globally,” and that with better mitigation strategies, and greater international coordination in place, the air travel and tourism sectors “can be drivers for economic recovery, both in the developed and the developing worlds.”

“As UN Secretary General Guterres has highlighted today in his own Aviation Day message, countries have recently pledged to enhance cooperation and risk management on COVID-19 border restrictions, and this commitment was strongly reaffirmed in the Declaration they issued at ICAO’s High-level Conference on COVID-19 this October,” remarked ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano.

“Whether toward current priorities on how to address variant risks on the basis of the best science and recommendations, or to build the travel and tourism sectors back better to minimize emissions and become more resilient to future pandemic threats, the solidarity of our UNWTO colleagues at this very important moment in global air transport and tourism recovery is greatly appreciated,” noted ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar.

As part of their pledge to build back better post-pandemic, the statement further highlights the two agencies’ shared commitment to taking “every opportunity to facilitate and accelerate the pace of innovation... advance progress towards the use of renewable energy, sustainable fuels, and other emissions reduction and elimination solutions, while continuously encouraging countries and the industry itself to meet or surpass the Net-Zero 2050 commitments we need to achieve the Global Goals.”

The full text of the new ICAO/UNWTO Joint Statement follows this announcement.



Resources for Editors

[UNSG Guterres statement for International Civil Aviation Day](#)

Full text of ICAO/UNWTO Joint Statement - International Civil Aviation Day 2021

This International Civil Aviation Day, the UN Aviation and World Tourism organizations (ICAO/UNWTO) have issued a joint call for efforts to reconnect the world to be accelerated.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought global air mobility and tourism to an abrupt halt. It also pressed pause on trillions of dollars' worth of economic activity. Millions of livelihoods and businesses have been placed at risk. And while increasing vaccination rates are helping to kickstart the return of international aviation and restart tourism, much more still needs to be done.

We therefore add our organizations' voices to those of the G7, G20, and the many countries who have called for borders to be opened to fully vaccinated travelers, travelers with acceptable proof of recovery from previous infection, and travelers holding mutually recognized and ICAO VDS-secured personal health certificates.

We also jointly stress that restrictions on travel considered in response to new variants of the COVID-19 virus must be only used as a very last resort. Such restrictions are discriminatory, ineffective and against the guidance of the World Health Organization.

ICAO and UNWTO also call for equal access to vaccines, and for efforts towards vaccine equity to be intensified and accelerated. This is especially critical for developing countries still bearing the brunt of the pandemic and least able to cope with its economic and social impacts.

With pent up travel and tourism demand now clearly evident in every global region, and with better mitigation strategies and greater international coordination in place, our organizations believe that our sectors can be drivers for economic recovery, both in the developed and the developing worlds.

However, as the restart of international civil aviation and tourism does get underway, ICAO and UNWTO recognize that a return to 'business as usual' would be a dereliction of responsibility in a post-pandemic world facing a climate crisis and ongoing economic inequality.

To build greater resilience to future health emergencies within our respective sectors, our agencies will work with governments to improve travel and tourism crisis response coordination, and to rethink and modernize every step of the passenger journey, with a focus on safety and security. Air travelers must be able to expect a safe, secure and healthy travel experience from check in to arriving at their destination.

To ensure the sustainability of air tourism in the face of the climate emergency, we will also take every opportunity to facilitate and accelerate the pace of innovation. In particular, we will advance progress towards the use of renewable energy, sustainable fuels, and other emissions reduction and elimination solutions, while continuously encouraging countries and the industry itself to meet or surpass their commitments. And, as global air connectivity continues to expand, and to connect more of us to each other and to our natural environments, we must ensure that it does so on a progressively greener and more sustainable basis. Countries must set aggressive targets through our agencies so that international and domestic commitments progress together, and so effectively address the impacts of travel and tourism.

The outcome of our shared efforts will play a critical role in assuring the most basic capability of many countries to invest toward and realize the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and all objectives to build-back-better in global air connectivity and tourism must be reviewed and fine-tuned in support of the 2030 Agenda and Our Common Agenda objectives.

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.

General Contact

communications@icao.int

Twitter: [@ICAO](https://twitter.com/ICAO)

Media Contact

William Raillant-Clark

Communications Officer

wraillantclark@icao.int

+1 514-954-6705

+1 514-409-0705 (mobile)

Twitter: [@wraillantclark](https://twitter.com/wraillantclark)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/)