

MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINA FIGUERES

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The year 2015 will go down in history as the year that governments of the world came together and set a new, transformative development agenda. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September and the Paris Agreement in December, governments set a course for socially and environmentally responsible growth.

Now, all investment, enterprise and governance must be carefully considered to transform growth and bring it in line with the vision laid out in these agreements. This is a paradigm shift that requires action across all facets of the economy. Every sector must contribute to reducing emissions and increasing resilience.

The Paris Agreement enshrines a clear long term goal that guides this transformation – the determination to limit warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius, with a stated aim of keeping rise as close to 1.5 degrees as possible. Understood as an emissions pathway, this means restoring the balance between emissions and the planet’s absorptive capacity in the second half of the century.

Achieving this goal must be marked by a peak of global emissions and a steep decline immediately after. This peak must happen soon, which will only happen through urgent action by all – every country, every community, every company.

One of the first steps towards meaningful contributions from every industry is an honest assessment of current environmental responsibility and sustainability actions. Through understanding and awareness of how our activity impacts the environment, and in particular the climate, we can curb emissions and adapt to impacts built into the climate system.

The ICAO 2016 Environmental Report is a crucial step that allows aviation to produce policy that leads to peaking emissions in the industry. This report allows for informed policy decisions based on sound science.

International aviation, led by ICAO, has already laid the foundations for this work. Through the Basket of Measures, through the recently adopted CO₂ standard, and through the work on developing a new market-based measure, international aviation is well positioned to peak the sector’s emissions within the next few years.

Coherent and cohesive policy applied across international borders is a necessity for an industry that thrives on connecting countries. Through market mechanisms, research and development into new fuels and high efficiency operations in the air and on the ground, the international aviation industry will help nations meet their Paris Agreement contributions.

Clearly, there is ambition to address emissions through climate action within the industry. There is a long-term path that includes the Basket of Measures, new fuels and other technological innovations. In the near term, a market-based measure must be a cornerstone to build an ambitious climate target that connects aviation to global solutions.

The foundation and commitment for meaningful progressive climate action is in place. Commitment must now be followed by action. When ICAO’s 39th Assembly meets in Montreal this September, ICAO member states have the opportunity to take action that matches stated ambition.

This opportunity for bold action integrates aviation into the global climate change solution space. I urge you to seize this opportunity, put in place your path to climate neutrality by 2020 and seek ambition that allows you to exceed that aspirational aim by peaking and declining aviation emissions even sooner.

The UNFCCC secretariat stands ready to support ICAO. We can and must work together to find solutions that spell success for the Paris Agreement.

Paris was a call to action for all. I am confident that aviation will be counted among those responsible for successfully putting the world on course to fulfilling the transformative vision that emerged in Paris – a resilient, climate-safe future.