



## ICAO Council President calls for innovation and solidarity at ATN Summer Aviation Forum

For immediate release

**Montréal, 28 August 2020** – Stressing that we are living through an important turning point for aviation today, the Council President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano, told the gathered aviation leaders at the Air Transport News (ATN) 2020 Summer Aviation Forum in Athens, Greece, today that innovation and continued partnership will be critical to aviation’s greener and more sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

“COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on local and global air connectivity, and on the many countries and operators who made that connectivity possible,” Mr. Sciacchitano commented. “It has also tragically impacted the lives of the hundreds of millions of economically vulnerable men and women around the world, many of them people who depend on aviation and tourism for their very livelihoods.”

Referencing the UN policy brief on Transforming Tourism released earlier this week, the ICAO Council President noted its points on how the relationship between tourism, natural ecosystems, and the populations which maintain them is complex and symbiotic, and that UN Secretary General Guterres was apt in describing our ability to travel and share the world as a “wonder of the world” in and of itself.

“Given the importance of air travel to such fundamental collective aspirations, and to every individual’s quality of life, aviation leaders have a great responsibility upon them today as we confront the existential threats of this pandemic,” Sciacchitano said.

“In the first place we have a duty to keep current passengers and crew protected from COVID-19 health risks through every stage of the air travel experience. Secondly, we need to keep commercial civil aviation viable from the most basic of economic standpoints. Thirdly, we must ensure that it restarts and recovers with due consideration of all associated safety, security, and other traditional aviation performance metrics. And lastly, we need to rebuild it on a solid foundation of sustainability – both in terms of the network’s ability to better withstand future pandemics, and its overall role in the social and environmental impacts of travel and tourism.”

The first and third of these priorities were why the ICAO Council produced its CART Report and Take-off Guidelines earlier this year. They were also the driver for the many other activities undertaken at the Secretariat level in ICAO, notably with respect to the special guidance, monitoring platforms, and resources it has made available while keeping supply chains and humanitarian corridors functioning.

Addressing the penultimate priorities in terms of how air transport ‘builds back better’ and more sustainably, Sciacchitano noted it will require “the vision and leadership of all us in this forum today, and a heavy reliance on innovation going forward.”

“Whether we are talking entirely new technologies, or new applications of existing technologies, solutions are now at hand to permit us to pre-screen passengers more extensively than ever before, for both health and security risks, and in a manner less disruptive than today. We are also presented with a reality whereby many older and more emissions-intensive aircraft are being

pulled from the skies, and in significant numbers. This presents opportunities to assure a much greener post-COVID fleet, and in light of recent targets which were announced even the age of electric commercial aircraft could be upon us by the next decade.”

Sciacchitano also emphasized that most of the onus toward addressing these priorities and enabling innovation also falls to air transport operators, manufacturers and others, even as they now face incredible challenges to the fundamentals of their businesses and operations.

“As the Council Task Force underscored in its CART Report, it is therefore of the utmost importance that all aviation stakeholders continue to show solidarity with one another, and to “work as one aviation team” toward our shared goal of safely and sustainably reconnecting the world,” he said.

“This is a time not only for great leadership, but also deeper collaboration, and I can think of no other sector more capable in those capacities than our own.”

The one-day event entitled *Summer Aviation Forum: Recovery and the flightpath to new aviation* was organized Dr. Kostas Iatrou, Director General of Hermes Air Transport Organisation and CEO of ATN - Air Transport News.



While in Athens, ICAO Council President Sciacchitano met with Greece's Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, H.E. Kostantinos Karamanlis (at right). He was accompanied by the Representative of Greece on the ICAO Council, Ms. Maria Saranti.

## Resources for Editors

[ICAO COVID-19 Platform](#)  
[ICAO Council CART Report](#)  
[ICAO Air Cargo](#)

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and guidance necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States.

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