



ICAO, UNWTO to strengthen collaboration for air transport and tourism recovery

For immediate release

Montréal, 25 October 2021 – Recognizing that aviation and tourism are critical tools in the environmental, economic, and social development of countries in every world region, ICAO and the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) formalized a new Memorandum of Understanding today.

Signed by ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano, and by UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, the new agreement aims to strengthen the relationship between air transport and tourism in research, policy and management areas, improve coordination on efficient border management priorities, and support travel and tourism recovery and transformation in light of climate change imperatives.

It will also address improved coordination on technical and policy advice for countries, as well as joint advocacy, events, and fundraising efforts.

“This agreement is an important step to help our organizations address joint data and research initiatives, the modernization and financing of aviation infrastructure, and the alleviation of economic regulatory constraints to enhance air connectivity and seamless travel,” noted President Sciacchitano.

“It will also add fresh support for the recommendations of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART), while permitting us to jointly and more effectively address current priorities such as climate change, the scaling up of tourism and aviation innovation, and ensuring countries reflect the priorities of the tourism and aviation sectors in States’ economic development planning.”

Key air passenger facilitations areas addressed in the new agreement included the implementation of the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) strategy and increased international utilization of the ICAO Public Key Directory, which is a central repository for exchanging the information required to authenticate ePassports.

Both organizations will also promote the adoption of ICAO Visible Digital Seal (VDS) technology for the verification of travel related health proofs, and closer collaboration on health and civil aviation issues.

“This is a critical moment for collective action and outcomes on air network and tourism recovery,” President Sciacchitano underscored. “As committed partners, and in collaboration with industry and other stakeholders, ICAO and the UNWTO can help to put millions back to work and revitalize economies all over the world.”

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “Tourism and air travel are essential pillars of growth and opportunity, most notably for developing countries and communities. As air travel resumes and tourism restarts, both sectors must collaborate to support the livelihoods of today and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The partnership between UNWTO and ICAO will allow exactly this.”



Resources for Editors

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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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