

## **Sustainability of the air transport industry**

(Presented by ACAO)

### [The importance of air transport for economic development](#)

The air transport sector is a key component of the world's economic and social system, facilitating trade, investment and tourism, and connecting countries around the world.

This sector's contribution to pre-pandemic global GDP was about US\$3.5 billion. In addition, the air transport sector contributed in the same period by providing 87.7 million jobs, which does not exceed 13% of the total associated and indirect opportunities which include tourism services, transportation, logistics, communications, and marketing of various products and consumer items. Total spending by air travelers reached \$902 billion in 2019, highlighting the aviation sector's role as a key partner in developing the tourism sector.

In the Arab world, the aviation sector is a major stimulus for the economy, with air transport contributing about 7.8% to Arab gross domestic product, double that of the world record, equivalent to \$181 billion. "In addition, the air transport sector has created nearly 6 million jobs."

The global aviation industry is also in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Studies show that the worldwide air transport industry plays an essential role in supporting the goals of sustainable development, especially the goals of poverty eradication, by supporting airlines to maintain their employees and prevent the diversion of workers from the civil aviation sector, by eradicating hunger by asserting that the air carriers continue humanitarian cargo flights for areas affected by natural disasters and famine through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, the World Food Program, and good health, by continuing to transport medical assistance to countries affected by HIV and in need of medical aid, and by establishing partnerships to achieve the goals, by promoting partnerships between all the international aviation industry, airlines, the management of commercial companies and manufacturers, as well as business and producers, through the restoration of economic activity, business and business world gross product.

In this article, we will examine the most important aspects that may contribute to the sustainability of air transport activity.

### [Strengthening the Gains of the Aviation Sector in Managing the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

The Coronavirus pandemic has led to an unprecedented global crisis and marked a significant turning point in human history. The civil aviation sector is the most affected by this crisis because its role lies in transporting people and goods worldwide for travel, tourism, business and trade purposes.

However, the international community mobilized all means and efforts to confront the spread of the coronavirus and limit its repercussions on various life-saving facilities.

We have seen how the worldwide civil aviation community has collaborated with the various international civil aviation agencies since the virus's introduction. Since the virus's emergence, civil aviation authorities and stakeholders have taken the initiative to assess its danger and implement measures to assist in maintaining flights, particularly in light of States' hasty decision to close their air, land, and sea borders in order to protect their citizens.

In accordance with the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and its article 14, the General Secretariat of the Organization has initiated a mechanism to coordinate with international and regional organizations to follow up on the developments of the outbreak and its impact on air transport activity in various countries of the world and to implement urgent measures in the areas of safety and civil aviation security, as well as the facilities for securing flights, especially those that have been allocated for the persons repatriation and the transport of goods to meet the needs of peoples, including equipment and medicines for treating the infected persons and protecting citizens.

Given that the pandemic did not discriminate against any country, it was necessary to agree on global measures, overseen by the ICAO Council, that enabled the adoption of precautionary measures at airports and aircrafts prepared by the ICAO Council Task Force for the Aviation Sector's Recovery (CART), which is composed of experts and representatives from member states, international and regional organizations, and aviation industry institutions.

The CART Group's proposals also addressed flight security and safety, as well as financial and economic support for air carriers to enable them to continue operating.

To guarantee the optimal execution of these actions and recommendations, the ICAO Secretariat, guided by the ICAO Council, adopted a global and regional roadmap outlining the work to be done and the procedures and tools for action.

The roadmap established frameworks to assist the air transport industry and civil aviation authorities by organizing a variety of collaborative initiatives with international and regional organizations and stakeholders, including the following:

- Communication and coordination with all stakeholders.
- Establishment of regional working groups.
- Facilitate the implementation of programs in cooperation with WHO.
- An inventory of the needs of countries and the challenges they face in organizing flights.
- chain logistics support.
- organizing repatriation flights.

This road map, prepared by the ICAO Secretariat, sets out the framework for action at the central and regional levels, involving Member States, international and regional organizations and stakeholders, to optimize the implementation of the recommendations of the ICAO Council to manage the crisis resulting from the outbreak of the epidemic and the recovery and recovery of the civil aviation sector.

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic has led to an unprecedented crisis that the international community was not prepared to face. The mobilization achieved by the International Civil Aviation Organization and the aforementioned efforts to confront the crisis and to facilitate the recovery process deserve to benefit from it and work to put it in a stronger and sustainable legal framework so that we can be more prepared to face similar or more severe crises, relying on the Chicago Convention as a reference which covers the current situation.

### [The importance of regional blocs in the recovery of air transport](#)

Among the precautionary measures adopted by countries to counter the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which affected the air transport sector, is the closure of borders in most countries of the world, especially those that are important markets for air and tourism transport activity, where they have been more severely affected in air transport activity, compared to other countries that practice this activity within the framework of regional blocs, which have an integrated market, as an example of that the European Union Market. There is also the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), bearing in mind that the idea of regional blocs developed among many countries to create similar markets, including the Arab region, Latin America and Africa. This latter is now working to activate the African common air transport market. This would also contribute to the revival of air transport among them and the revival of global air transport.

In light of the foregoing, efforts should be made to strengthen these blocs' roles in liberalizing air transport and mitigating the effects of various crises, particularly those linked to pandemics.

### [Continued digitization of passenger and cargo air transport data](#)

The actions of the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) allowed passenger and cargo flights to continue. We highlight, among other things, recommendation No. 14 on the adoption of public health corridors in accordance with health requirements established by States to facilitate flights, recommendations No. 15 and No. 16 on the temporary lifting of restrictions and the adoption of additional procedures for the transport of dangerous materials, and the initiative of Latin American countries to temporarily liberalize Freedom Seven as a model experience.

These steps come at a time when supply chains have begun to experience several disruptions since the early days of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, resulting in the inability to respond to the urgent and increasing demands for various goods, the high price of land and sea transport and the need to speed up the provision of some basic materials around the world.

These factors boosted demand for air cargo services to the point where it would surpass pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

While civil aviation's public health, safety, and security procedures, as well as those developed by the CART Task Force, have played an important role in achieving these figures for air freight and the gradual increase in passenger traffic, there are still challenges to this trend, some of which can be overcome by strengthening the ICAO system of standards, particularly those associated with the Unified Electronic Passenger Transport Database, by including health data and establishing a similar database for cargo transport.

### [Commitment to reduce the impact of emissions on climate](#)

Action to achieve aviation sustainability goals is imperative, and even if the decline in air traffic due to the COVID-19 pandemic of aviation environmental impacts is reduced very significantly, the sector needs to prepare for eventual recovery and remain committed to reducing its emissions by

reducing or compensating, which requires support for research and development aimed at introducing new sustainable aircraft technologies, the use of alternative energies, as well as the implementation of trade plans and compensation for such emissions, especially since, according to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the expected impact on air transport costs is between 0.2 and 0.6 per cent of total international air transport revenue for 2025, and the expected increase in ticket prices will not exceed 3.0 per cent.

Further development of State legislation in line with the recent ICAO decisions is required to optimize environmental developments, emissions trading, market mechanism and associated actions.

-

- END -