



**Statement by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee (GTCC)
6th Virtual Meeting**

(19 October 2020)

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1. Good morning everyone.
2. Pleased let me begin by appreciating how deeply inter-dependent air transport and tourism are, and how much ICAO values the close and effective cooperation established between our agency and the UNWTO.

3. Since our last discussions together, the situation surrounding the aviation sector has continued to evolve.

4. Unfortunately, this evolution has been almost entirely negative in terms of both global mobility and connectivity, as well as with respect to the economic sustainability of the airports and airlines which realize that connectivity.

5. In consideration of the fact that over half of the world's international travelers arrive at their destinations by air, and that these same travelers deeply rely on the availability of local food and accommodations, we should appreciate here how these downturns in air transport also have significant impacts on global hospitality markets.

6. While recent ICAO analyses have revealed some slight upturns in traffic and passenger volumes, these have been largely insignificant when weighed against the depth and severity of the unprecedented April low-points we recorded.

7. September passenger totals were only 33% their 2019 levels, and international passenger levels were much worse at just 19% of what was seen last year.

8. A troubling dip in the recoveries of some regions is also becoming apparent now, likely as a result of the pandemic 'second waves' some countries are now recording.
9. Overall this year we expect global airline passenger totals to decline by some 2.8 billion domestic and international travelers.
10. The national air transport pandemic response guidelines issued by the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART), have had helpful but limited effects on the pandemic and its restrictions.

11. Countries continue to adopt and apply the recommended CART approaches, and to optimize whatever air connectivity they can in doing so, but the highest levels of national priority in many states remain pandemic-focused.

12. I think the hard lesson of these results is that we'll need more effective medical approaches and solutions at hand before any meaningful levels of national alignment, and therefore traveler confidence and spending, will return to the travel and transport sectors.

13. In this respect I'm pleased to update you that the CART Task Force is now finalizing the *Phase II* of its 'Take-off' guidelines, and that this amended guidance may include a risk management framework for the evaluation of COVID-19 testing solutions.

14. This holds the potential to alleviate the need for quarantines for international air travelers and tourists, or to shorten quarantine periods where those may be retained.

15. This would represent another important step toward restoring traveler confidence, but at the same time we must be realistic in such expectations.

16. Our latest ICAO projections point to 2022 as the earliest we will begin to see any significant trends toward sectoral recovery in domestic travel, with international travel being still slower to rebound.

17. These factors, in conjunction with the fact that airlines and airports are still being counted on to quickly move food and other urgent and essential air cargo wherever the world needs it, underscores the critical importance of public subsidies for air transport sector at this time.

18. In conclusion, let me please reiterate that, with hundreds of millions of livelihoods now hanging in the balance, the need for continued solidarity and collaboration among the travel and tourism sectors, as exemplified here today, has never been more urgent or critical.

19. Thank you.