



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY MR. S ISWARAN, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF TRADE RELATIONS, SINGAPORE

(Presented by Singapore)

President of the Assembly,
President of the ICAO Council, Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano
Secretary-General of the ICAO, Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
Distinguished Delegates,

INTRODUCTION

1. Two and a half years ago, the COVID-19 pandemic dealt an unprecedented blow to international aviation. Air travel was decimated, and governments around the world had to make difficult decisions to keep their populations safe and the aviation sector going. We are now emerging from the crisis, with international air travel returning to the skies, and many States, including Singapore, reopening their borders. Families, enterprises, and countries are once again connected.

2. ICAO has played a key role in facilitating the recovery of international aviation. ICAO was quick to respond by establishing the Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) which provided practical, aligned guidance to government and industry to restart the international air transport sector and recover from the impact of the pandemic in a globally coordinated manner. The ICAO Member States also reaffirmed our support for the commitments made at the ICAO High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) in 2021 to rebuild international aviation through collective action.

3. The strong international collaboration, led by ICAO and supported by Member States and industry, has enabled the international civil aviation to collectively rebuild and rejuvenate air travel, with the health, safety, and security of the travelling public as paramount priorities.

EMERGING STRONGER FROM COVID-19

4. International aviation is now at a turning point. To support the steady recovery of the sector from the impact of COVID-19, and to lay strong foundations for its future growth and resilience, we will need to address three emerging priorities.

5. **Building capacity commensurate with demand.** As international air travel returns to and surpasses pre-COVID levels, the capacity challenges of the pre-COVID years will return. Infrastructure and manpower will need to keep up with the demand for air travel, which will continue to grow. It is therefore imperative that we build up capacity in the global aviation system commensurate with demand. This includes revisiting infrastructure expansion plans and other efforts which are needed to sustain a smooth return to pre-pandemic rates of growth in air travel.

6. **Investing in the next generation of aviation professionals and augmenting technological capabilities.** It is essential that we continue investing in our aviation workforce. The next generation of aviation professionals will need to be equipped with skillsets to innovate and adapt to future challenges. Augmenting our technological and innovation capabilities will also allow global aviation to make critical strides in a wide range of areas, including air traffic management, aviation safety, and aviation security.

7. **Establishing sustainability as an urgent long-term priority for the aviation sector.** Climate change is an existential challenge for all States. The global aviation community must adopt sustainability as an urgent long-term priority, and act decisively to reduce the sector's emissions. Under the leadership of ICAO, the sector has taken important steps in this regard and we must continue working together to sustain the momentum in decarbonising air travel.

8. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the enduring fundamentals – safety, security, efficiency, and equal opportunity. These are enshrined in ICAO's SARPs, Global Plans, guidance, and policies which will also need to be strengthened, adapted, and future-proofed, in order to ready ourselves for challenges that lie over the horizon.

9. These critical priorities call for close and continual collaboration among ICAO, States, industry, and all other aviation stakeholders. Collaboration is key because resources and capabilities are not evenly distributed, while global recovery from COVID-19 has also been uneven. Hence, Singapore is committed to continue supporting capacity building, technical assistance and training efforts. Only by learning from best practices, sharing knowledge, and catalysing collective action, can we ensure that no country is left behind.

CONCLUSION

10. Even as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise that many other challenges still lie ahead. To prevail, we will need to address the critical areas of capacity, talent, technology, and sustainability, while strengthening the aviation system's fundamentals. ICAO's steadfast leadership has shown that global cooperation is key to unlocking progress and growth. Singapore is firmly committed to supporting ICAO in its untiring efforts to build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for international aviation. We stand ready to work with all stakeholders and partners to contribute to these efforts for the benefit of all States.

Mr. S Iswaran
Minister for Transport and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Republic of Singapore

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