

# ICAO Response to the Letter to Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders from High Level Champions for Global Climate Action

July 2020

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This submission has been compiled by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in response to the request received from the High-Level Champions to provide feedback on how to improve the Marrakech Partnership for enhancing ambition.

ICAO would like to thank the High-Level Champions for Global Climate Action, Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz of Chile and Mr. Nigel Topping of the United Kingdom for this opportunity to reflect its views and report on the progress on the international agreements, reached under the auspices of ICAO's 193 Member States, to address carbon emissions from international aviation.

ICAO's responses to the questions raised in the Champions' letter are provided below.

ICAO stands ready to contribute to the success of the High-Level Champions for Global Climate Action, which relies on continued and strengthened cooperation within different UN system Organizations.

# 1. How would you define success of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership in terms of enhancing ambition in the next 5 years and beyond?

Over the last few years, the global progress on the climate change agenda has been unprecedented.

The UNFCCC Paris Agreement, the ICAO Assembly Resolutions on Climate Change and on the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), and the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, at the global level, are the main pillars that underpin the transformation to a far safer and more prosperous planet. Together, this triptych of international agreements is the testament to the importance placed on climate change by the international community.

Under the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC Parties still need to elaborate rules related to transparency, accounting, the new market mechanism, the global stocktaking, and the Agreement's implementation and compliance mechanism. The strength and rigor of these elements of the Paris Agreement will play an important role in determining its success and in encouraging – also through the action of the High-Level Champions - more ambition over time.

The Montreal Protocol and the ICAO CORSIA – the first global market-based measure that addresses CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from any industry sector – complement the achievement of ambition set by the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.

In October 2019, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly adopted [Resolution A40-18](#), reiterating two global aspirational goals for the international aviation sector of improving 2% annual fuel efficiency and stabilizing its net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 2020 onwards (so called “carbon neutral growth from 2020”) as established at the 2010 ICAO Assembly. To achieve the global aspirational goals and to promote sustainable growth of international aviation, ICAO and its 193 Member States, in collaboration with the aviation industry, are pursuing a [basket of CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation measures](#), including advanced [aircraft technology](#), [operational improvements](#), use of [sustainable aviation fuels](#), and the [Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation \(CORSIA\)](#). The CORSIA was adopted in 2016 as the first global market-based measure for any industry sector, and it will complement other mitigations measures to achieve the carbon neutral growth from 2020 by offsetting the increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international aviation. The 2019 ICAO Assembly also requested the exploration of the feasibility of a [long-term global aspirational goal](#) for international aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, for consideration by the next ICAO Assembly in 2022

ICAO is of the view that the success of the High-Level Champions will also be measured by clear recognition and encouragement of stronger and more ambitious climate action by other existing international

agreements (e.g. ICAO, Montreal Protocol) and their respective Member States, which will complement the achievement of ambition set by the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.

## 2. How can the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership add the most value and complement existing efforts to drive ambition and transformation in the next 5 years and beyond?

The High-Level Champions can promote and reflect the significant achievements by ICAO and its Member States to address international aviation and climate change, under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, including the Transport group and other thematic areas, as a good example of concrete action by a specific sector that can enhance existing efforts to further drive ambition and transformation.

For example, implementation of CORSIA is well underway, following the development and adoption by the ICAO Council of the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in Volume IV of Annex 16 to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. According to one of the most concrete and robust CO<sub>2</sub> emissions Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system developed for any industry sector, from 1 January 2019, all aircraft operating on international routes are being monitored for their annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As a result, every year from 2020, third-party verified carbon emissions inventories are reported by all Member States to the ICAO CORSIA Central Registry (CCR).

Along with the timely implementation of CORSIA by all States and airlines, the success of CORSIA is demonstrated by the fact that 88 States, representing approximately 80% of international aviation activity, voluntarily participate in CORSIA's offsetting requirements from year 2021. This level of participation has been possible thanks to an unprecedented [Assistance, Capacity-building and Training \(ACT-CORSIA\)](#) programme under the spirit of ICAO's "No Country Left Behind" initiative.

The ACT-CORSIA Programme is composed of various elements, which are intended to facilitate better understanding and the access to information on CORSIA, including: the establishment of CORSIA Buddy Partnerships, the availability of model regulations, Frequently Asked Questions, Brochures and Leaflets, Videos, the CORSIA Seminars and Workshops, Online Tutorials, and other Background Information. Complete information about the ACT-CORSIA Programme is reflected on [ICAO CORSIA public website](#). Under the ACT-CORSIA programme, CORSIA Buddy Partnerships have constantly provided support for implementation of CORSIA, bridging together more than 130 donor and recipient States in all regions.

It is important that CORSIA must be considered as a complementary measure to help the sector achieve its aspirational goal of carbon neutral growth from 2020 in the short and medium term, and that the offsetting scheme is not intended to replace advances in aircraft technology, operations, and sustainable aviation fuels to reduce aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the sector.

The use of best available technologies on aircraft will be ensured by applying the ICAO global CO<sub>2</sub> certification Standard adopted in 2017. In addition, the pace for introducing innovative technologies is unprecedented. By 2022, [hybrid and electric aircraft](#) are already entering in service on shorter route flights.

Regarding the use of cleaner sources of energy and innovation in aviation, more than 250,000 commercial flights have used a blend of sustainable fuels. Aircraft are now able to fly using fuels based on different, more sustainable feedstocks, such as used cooking oil, waste, and other sources of biomass. To date, eight fuel conversion processes have already been certified for use in aviation. Nine international airports regularly distribute blended sustainable fuels.

The [ICAO Global Framework for Aviation Alternative Fuels \(GFAAF\)](#) is a global platform where information on worldwide initiatives and actions on aviation fuels are shared. The website includes a live feed of flights operating with alternative fuels and provides a variety of information related to aviation fuels, including over 600 news announcements dating back to 2005, details of past and ongoing projects, and facts and figures. The framework has been continuously updated by ICAO, whenever new information is provided by Member States, International Observer Organizations, or other industry stakeholders.

On the operational side, many steps have been taken on the ground and in the air to reduce aviation emissions. A substantial number of airports gain electricity sources by solar energy, and installed electrified gates that provide clean energy to aircraft preparing for the flight, instead of using aviation fuel. Modern air traffic management allows for substantial fuel savings, for example by the optimization of routes, and less waiting time for departing and landing. The recent study on “formation flight” shows that fuel savings up to 10% could be obtained.

The [ICAO State Action Plan and Assistance](#) initiative enables all Member States to establish a long-term strategy on climate change for the international aviation sector, involving all interested parties at national level. These parties are encouraged to work together to define a quantified baseline scenario, select appropriate emissions mitigation measures from ICAO's basket of measures, and calculate the expected results of implementing those measures. The level of detail submitted within a State Action Plan will ultimately enable ICAO to compile global progress towards meeting the goals set by Assembly Resolution A37-19, and reaffirmed by A38-18, A39-2, and [A40-18](#). States are invited to update their State Action Plans every three years, so that ICAO can continue to compile the quantified information submitted.

Thus, the High-Level Champions can add value under the Marrakesh Partnership by clearly recognizing and encouraging ICAO and its Member States to continue to take a lead in addressing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international civil aviation.

### 3. How can the High-Level Champions enhance collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyse global climate action?

#### a. How can Parties benefit from the action resulting from the Global Climate Action movement and how can this action best be reflected in the work of the High-Level Champions?

Non-Party stakeholders dealing with different thematic areas of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA) can look at the work of ICAO and its Member States in collaboration with the aviation industry and other stakeholders to address emissions from international aviation, as a concrete and practical example on how to successfully tackle emissions from a specific sector, in order to inspire their work and support and facilitate their consultations with governments.

ICAO's work, tools, and documentation could serve as references and best practices for other thematic areas and industrial sectors looking at the harmonization of their CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation measures, in order to facilitate the accounting of emissions reductions and ambition at a global level.

For example, ICAO established the first set of CORSIA Eligible Emissions Units which consists of six programmes providing eligible emissions units that could be purchased and cancelled by the aeroplane operators with offsetting requirements in the CORSIA pilot phase. ICAO also agreed on initial implementation rules on how to account for the life-cycle CO<sub>2</sub> reduction benefits of aviation fuels from various feedstocks and associated sustainability criteria, as well as a framework on how such fuels and producers should be certified. Aeroplane operators could use such fuels to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting requirements under CORSIA.

ICAO is the UN specialized agency with the specific mandate to address matters on international civil aviation through cooperation among its Member States and all other stakeholders. Within the Transport Thematic area of the MPGCA, some governments or organizations have launched certain initiatives in the mobility field. However, for those transport modes which are not regulated by any global inter-governmental organizations, numerous different policies and legislations (including goals and emission standards) are being developed at national and regional levels. In this regard, the High-Level Champions and the Global Climate Action movement can play a vital role for the global harmonization of these other initiatives and organized contribution to the UNFCCC process. In building up ambition, efforts should be intensified in identifying areas where no clear mandate, harmonized regulatory framework or global governance exist, rather than forging duplicative efforts in areas where institutional forums are already established with the appropriate level of expertise facilitation processes.

## **b. How can the COP and the UNFCCC process be more effective in the collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyse global climate action?**

International organizations, widely representing both the civil society and the aviation industry, are actively participating in the work of ICAO. Their inputs on different subjects, including environmental matters, are considered by the various ICAO bodies, which include the ICAO Assembly, the ICAO Council, and the ICAO Council's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), in their respective decision-making processes.

The COP and the UNFCCC process could be more effective in the collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders by learning from the experience under the ICAO process on how its Member States and other stakeholders have been collaborating in addressing emissions from international aviation.

More in general, progress on international issues may also be improved through enhanced coordination within the UN system itself, recognizing and building upon the existing mandates and available expertise of each UN organization.

## **c. How could the High-Level Champions through their work in accelerating action and ambition of non-Party stakeholders most effectively contribute to the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement?**

Global climate action still falls short of putting the world on a pathway to limiting climate change to 1.5°C. While the last ICAO Assembly in October 2019 recognized the progress realized in all elements of the CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation measures to achieve the sector's carbon neutral growth from 2020, it also requested that work on the feasibility of a long-term global aspirational goal (LTAG) for international aviation, with the aim of considering options and an implementation roadmap at the next Session of the ICAO Assembly in 2022.

An important cornerstone of the LTAG work is the [ICAO Stocktaking Seminar on aviation in-sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions](#). During this seminar, that will be held from 8 to 11 September 2020, ICAO Member States and other stakeholders will be invited to provide quantitative input to ICAO on innovations that reduce aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This Seminar will provide an opportunity to continue the quantification of current and future sustainable aviation fuel availability. Additionally, it will expand the scope of the stocktaking process by covering in-sector emissions reduction opportunities from aircraft technology improvements, innovations and operational improvements. ICAO Member States and stakeholders are invited to participate in the ICAO Stocktaking process by completing an [ICAO Stocktaking 2020 Questionnaire](#). The Seminar will build upon the success of the first ICAO Stocktaking Seminar toward the 2050 Vision for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFS 2019), which provided a forum for the exchange of information and was the first step towards the establishment of a quantified [2050 ICAO Vision for Sustainable Aviation Fuels](#).

The data collected will enable ICAO, including through the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), to support the work on the feasibility of a long-term global aspirational goal for international aviation.

The High-Level Champions can encourage Party and non-Party stakeholders to submit to ICAO further information, if available, on their latest innovations on CO<sub>2</sub> reductions in international aviation, and to actively participate in the ICAO stocktaking event in September 2020.

#### **4. On the basis of experience so far, how can the Marrakech Partnership be improved for enhancing ambition, including through new and existing tools?**

While the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action and its Transport Thematic Group, and the Climate Action Pathways, can represent an ideal venue for outreach and communication to UNFCCC Party and non-Party stakeholders, it is important for this forum to fully recognize the mandate, achievements and the processes that underpin the ICAO's work to address emissions from international aviation.

Decisions by ICAO Member States should not be preempted or undermined by any policy, statement, or recommendation put forward by UNFCCC Parties and non-Party stakeholders through the Marrakech Partnership, which should also focus on thematic areas that are not already regulated by inter-governmental agreements.