

# Net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 named a top priority at ICAO

The adoption of a Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) to achieve net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 received “overwhelming support” at the 41st Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The important step forward aligns states with the Paris Agreement objectives and the net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 resolution agreed upon by airlines at the 77th IATA Annual General Meeting in October 2021.

“Now that governments and industry are both focused on net zero by 2050, we expect much stronger policy initiatives in key areas of decarbonization such as incentivizing the production capacity of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF),” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General.

The Assembly also reinforced its commitment to the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and increased its ambition by agreeing to stabilize emissions of international aviation at 85% of the 2019 level, according to the release. Many governments emphasized CORSIA’s role as the only economic measure applied to manage the carbon footprint of international aviation.

“The lower baseline will place a significantly greater cost burden on airlines,” said Walsh. “So, it is more critical than ever that governments do not chip away at the cement which bonds CORSIA as the only economic measure to manage the carbon footprint of international aviation.”

According to the release, IATA estimates that perhaps 65 percent of the mitigation needed for net zero emissions in 2050 will come from SAF. Though all available one hundred million litres of SAF were purchased by industry in 2021, the supply remains limited and the price much higher than conventional jet fuel.

The Assembly’s outputs requested states to accelerate both the fuel certification and development of SAF and the certification of new aircraft and engines to allow the use of 100% SAF. To the ICAO Council, key requests included an ask to facilitate capacity building and technical assistance to states for SAF programs in addition to a call to work with stakeholders to define and promote the transition to SAF.

Walsh called for governments to “not lose momentum,” inviting them to “work with industry to implement an effective global policy framework capable of attracting the financial resources needed to put aviation on an unstoppable track to achieve net zero by 2050. There is lots of work to do, and not a minute to lose.”