

Introductory remarks – ACI

Airports play an essential role within the aviation ecosystem. They are facilitators of the many and varied actors who each play their part in the air transport industry. And, as focal points, for better or worse, of the communities they serve.

Airports Council International (ACI) has become increasingly proactive in addressing the challenges faced by the industry. Airports have long faced the problems of: addressing aircraft noise, and this has not gone away; local air quality which affects people working and living around airports; and, now the global challenge of reducing climate impacts of the airport itself and of those who use it.

ACI has developed its own tools and policy frameworks to address these challenges: from the early establishment of the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme to the adoption in June 2021 of the first industry net zero carbon goal at a global level. More recently, ACI has worked in partnership with industry colleagues to adopt a similar goal across the whole aviation industry and supported ICAO and its Member States as it moved to adopt the Long-Term Aspirational Goal at the last Assembly. These goals are essential as they demonstrate the commitment of our entire industry to decarbonisation. This as we will see in this conference is essential if we are to attract the necessary investment for sustainable aviation fuel production and deployment.

ACI has also developed partnerships with non-aviation organisations such as the World Economic Forum. Together we have launched the Airports of Tomorrow initiative to address the energy, infrastructure, and financing needs of airports in the coming decades. The aviation sector cannot do this alone, and as we need to work closely with new and existing fuel suppliers, and critically with the finance community to make these goals reality.

The role of airports is not always obvious. But, we are at the centre of the decarbonisation challenge. We bring together the whole ecosystem. In technical terms airports are responsible for a relatively small percentage of total emissions (Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions) but they also have an important role to play in supporting the reduction of emissions from those using the airports, either as providers or consumers (Scope 3). This includes airlines, transport to and from the airport, emissions from ground handlers not employed directly by the airports, and many more. These challenges also mean opportunities, and we are examining the possibilities of developing energy hubs with renewable energy production at the centre. Airports can also support decarbonisation on the airport and off the airport – bringing benefits to the travelling public, and to the communities they serve.

Airports are key to integrating the provision of all alternative fuels and to supporting a just energy transition; they are economic centres where businesses can be established and the development of energy hubs could bring in new opportunities for sustainable economic growth, and creation of new, green jobs.

ACI supports the objectives of this Conference. It is essential that we agree a strong outcome statement and Vision to demonstrate the leadership of ICAO in this complex area. We, ACI and our members, will continue to strive to ensure that decarbonisation becomes a reality and to do so we need to send a strong signal to investors and to the world that we are ready to do what it takes.

Thank you.