

**Press Release  
For immediate release**

**Saudi's Future Aviation Forum marks start of 'golden era' for aviation**

- **Saudi Transport Minister calls for “unity” to build a global aviation sector fit for the future**
- **ICAO President says global aviation sector needs to be more coordinated and resilient, as Saudi Arabia proposes policy to aid industry recovery**
- **Saudi Energy Minister urges need for holistic approach to making the sector environmentally sustainable**

**Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: 10 May 2022** – The opening day of the inaugural Future Aviation Forum, in Riyadh, brought together more than 2,000 delegates and aviation leaders from around the world to develop solutions around three central pillars: growth, innovation and sustainability.

The Forum was opened by Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Transport and Logistical Services, who said it was a moment to showcase that aviation is an “industry for transformation” as economies look to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Aviation is typically a low margin business. When it works everybody wins but every year our industry suffers external crises and shocks. The crisis caused by the pandemic showed how divided we can be when we needed unity. Through this forum, we can establish a strong global voice to contribute to global wellbeing, sustainability, and prosperity. If we are successful, as I believe we can be, today will mark the start of a golden era of aviation,” Al Jasser said.

Salvatore Sciacchitano, President of the Council, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – reflecting on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the aviation industry – called for governments and civil aviation authorities to deepen cooperation and develop resilience-enhancing solutions against future crises.

“Should a similar crisis occur, governments need to take a more coordinated action. It will require more concerted efforts to protect citizens in regards to border closures, subsidies and other economic measures, and health protection requirements,” Sciacchitano said.

The ICAO President said investing in civil aviation systems is a global public good.

“The future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create friendship and understanding among the nations and the peoples of the world. And it can effectively promote that cooperation between nations and peoples upon which the peace of the world depends. International transport is a universal bridge between nations and continents, between cultures and traditions, between individuals and communities,” the ICAO President said.

In the spirit of international cooperation, at the opening of the Future Aviation Forum Saudi Arabia revealed a policy proposal to accelerate the recovery of international air travel to pre-pandemic levels. Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Duailej, President of Saudi's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), presented the Harmonising Air Travel policy, which aims to ensure international aviation operators can easily access travel health requirements and respond to future public health crises in a unified manner, thereby improving their collective resilience.

“The Harmonising Air Travel policy will give our industry and passengers the ability to understand at a glance the openness of any given country during a future health emergency and to use that knowledge to make decisions. It is a policy that will save our industry billions of dollars in future crises and maintain confidence in our operations on which we all rely,” said Al-Duailej.



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With sustainability among the three pillars of the Future Aviation Forum, delegates and aviation leaders also heard from Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud, the Minister of Energy of Saudi Arabia, who called for a “holistic” and “openminded” approach to developing solutions to green the sector.

“We are at a juncture where we have to look at everything and be mindful of and effective in meeting sustainability goals, which you cannot deliver with a cherry-picking approach. We have quite a few options [to achieve sustainability goals], and we must look at them all,” said Prince Abdulaziz,

The Future Aviation Forum will continue for a second day on Tuesday, 10 May, where experts will continue to tackle the three key pillars of the Forum, with an exploration of the aviation sector’s contribution to the global economy, its impact on tourism, as well as regulatory reform.

Saudi Arabia’s transport and logistics sector, a major pillar of the Vision 2030 economic transformation plan, is undergoing rapid development. The Kingdom aims to generate 356 billion SAR – or just under \$100 billion USD – in investment into its aviation sector by 2030. The Kingdom has plans to launch a new international airline, and to undertake major upgrades to its aviation infrastructure.

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## Notes to editors:

### About the Saudi Aviation Strategy

The Saudi Aviation Strategy is an ambitious strategy with privatization at its heart, which will transform the entire KSA aviation ecosystem. Its goal is to create a global investment environment that empowers the sector’s contribution to the Kingdom’s GDP while enabling the national tourism strategy and meeting the Kingdom’s growing cargo needs. It aims to lead Saudi Arabia to become the number one aviation sector in the Middle East by 2030, driven by the Kingdom’s *Vision 2030*.

The strategy is backed by private sector and government investments and is developing Saudi Arabia’s civil aviation sector across the Kingdom’s airports, airlines, aircraft, and amenities. This includes extending connectivity from 99 to more than 250 destinations across 29 airports, tripling annual passenger traffic to 330 million, including two global long haul connecting hubs, and increasing air cargo capacity to 4.5m tons.

The Saudi Aviation Strategy provides opportunities for the people of Saudi Arabia, opening access and improving ease of travel and customer experience, directly creating jobs within the sector and by enabling the tourism strategy, and empowering local businesses to expand and build a new skills base.

Led by the Kingdom’s regulator, the General Authority for Civil Aviation (GACA), the strategy will elevate Saudi aviation by supporting industries that fall under the civil aviation sector to enable their ability to adapt to global change, enhance their competitiveness and raise the level of services provided to passengers with a focus on creating a sustainable future.

### About the Future Aviation Forum



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English:

The inaugural Future Aviation Forum serves as a premier networking and deal-making event that connects global aviation leaders to shape the evolution of international air travel, drive forward solutions in a post-pandemic world and ensure that sector thrives in the years to come. Held from the 9-11 May in Riyadh, it features more than 120 speakers, with over 2,000 attendees and representatives from every continent expected to attend. Delegates will attend 40 sessions, focusing on three core thematic pillars: passenger experience, sustainability, and business recovery post-Covid.

Hosted by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Forum will propel Saudi Arabia's emergence as the region's pre-eminent aviation hub.

For more information, please visit <https://www.futureaviationforum.com/>

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