

## **WBA 2021 Virtual Conference Opening**

Good morning, good afternoon or good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me congratulate WBA on the successful organization of its 2021 conference under the difficult circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic. As you all know, the pandemic has had a huge impact on many industry sectors, and aviation is one of those that are facing ever-growing challenges. A safe, secure and sustainable restart and recovery of the aviation sector is undoubtedly a priority. Therefore, despite the difficulties brought by the pandemic, we need to continue our good work on further improving aviation safety.

Wildlife strikes can cause accidents and serious incidents, costing the aviation industry billions of dollars due to aircraft damage, flight delays and other operational impacts. Throughout the past years, ICAO has been taking initiatives in formulating International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and other provisions such as procedures for air navigation services (PANS) and guidance material, aiming to help States prevent wildlife strikes on, or in the vicinity of aerodromes. In May 2017, ICAO successfully hosted, along with ACI, a global symposium on wildlife strike hazard reduction. The symposium increased international awareness of wildlife strikes hazard to aviation. Among a number of take-home messages out of the symposium, I would like to mention two of them. First, everybody has a responsibility. Multiple-stakeholder cooperation is essential, involving regulators, airport operators, aircraft operators, air navigation service providers, pilots, manufacturers, local communities, as well as various wildlife strike committees at different levels. Second, strengthening regulatory requirements. Based on ICAO SARPs, States need to have appropriate

legislation and regulation to address the safety concerns, including those related to land use around an aerodrome.

Subsequent to the symposium, ICAO has recently published a new edition of Airport Services Manual, Part 3 - Wildlife Hazard Management. This work was assisted by the Wildlife Hazard Management Expert Group of the ICAO Aerodrome Design and Operations Panel. Mr. Albert De Hoon, a member of this expert group, has offered to do a presentation in this conference with some historical information and an introduction of this new edition of the manual, and this will take place in a few minutes after the opening session.

In the context of Covid-19 in relation to wildlife strike prevention, it should be noted that the prolonged aerodrome closure in some areas may have resulted in changes in habitat such as an increase in vegetation at, or in the vicinity of aerodromes, breaches in aerodrome fencing and drains, etc. In addition, due to reduced flights, new perching sites may have nested on aircraft parked at various locations within the aerodrome. There has been an alarming trend of accumulation of foreign objects, such as insect nests, in the aircraft pitot-static system that could result in such incidents as rejected take-offs or in-flight turn backs as aircraft are returned to service following temporary storage. To this end, I would like to stress that proper inspections should be carried out and that wildlife hazard management programmes should remain functional at aerodromes before their restart. I am happy to see that in the agenda for this conference, analysis on the covid-19 impact is included.

Finally, I would like to thank WBA for organizing this important conference, and wish you successful deliberations.

Thank you.

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