

ITF

Moving the
World
Forward



A NEW DEAL FOR AVIATION



ITF

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World
Forward**

THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION (ITF) IS A DEMOCRATIC, AFFILIATE-LED GLOBAL FEDERATION OF 670 TRADE UNIONS IN 147 COUNTRIES, REPRESENTING OVER 18 MILLION WORKERS IN ALL TRANSPORT SECTORS. THE ITF PASSIONATELY CAMPAIGNS FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS' RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND JUSTICE.

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THE WORLD NEEDS AN ECONOMICALLY, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION INDUSTRY NOW

The aviation industry is lurching between crisis and chaos. Covid-19 exacerbated economic inequality and aviation workers were on the frontlines of the global shutdown. Recovery from Covid-19 had barely begun with the lifting of pandemic-related travel restrictions before the demand for flights and increasing passenger numbers exposed the decades' old fault lines created by greed and mismanagement.

In a majority of the world's largest aviation markets passengers now face thousands of cancellations, delays, capacity reductions and even flight capping at some of the world's largest airports. Part of this crisis has been caused by the huge lay-offs during Covid-19. But the structural changes of the past four decades in the aviation industry: privatisation, de-regulation and fragmentation laid the foundations for this crisis.

A close-up photograph of a woman, likely a flight attendant, wearing a dark blue vest over a white collared shirt and a large red scarf. She has dark hair pulled back and is looking directly at the camera. A large, light blue arrow graphic is superimposed over the image, pointing upwards. The text is centered within the arrow's shaft.

**THE AVIATION
INDUSTRY IS
FACING AN
UNSUSTAINABLE
FUTURE.**

SHUTTING DOWN THE INDUSTRY AND SHUTTING OUT THE WORKFORCE

Globally the aviation industry reduced its workforce by over a third in response to the global shutdown. The response by the aviation industry to prioritise cash flow and minimise losses sent shockwaves through countries as governments grappled with the social and economic impact of decisions by the industry.

Unions warned that the mass lay-offs imposed by employers would lead to a worker shortage and trigger another crisis in this highly skilled, safety-critical industry. The alarm was raised.


Governments stepped in to keep the industry afloat and injected vast sums of money into some parts of the industry, with almost no strings attached.

At the same time, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and affiliated trade unions launched a three-step response calling for relief, recovery and reform of the aviation industry. We demanded an industry-wide response and coordination between employers, unions, and governments, to keep

the industry afloat, while planning for a safe and sustainable recovery from the pandemic. This response was focused on building an industry that is fit for purpose and resilient to future crises, addressing the underlying structural issues that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. Our calls were largely ignored.

Without serious, urgent measures, worker shortages will continue in different parts of the industry. For example, in air traffic services, freezes on the three-year training pipeline during the pandemic are on the brink of triggering a new worker shortage in the next few months. Combined with redundancies and early retirement programmes, the shortage of air traffic controllers will once more lead to cancellations and delays.

Without a coordinated response that addresses both immediate and longer-term worker shortages, alongside structural transformation, aviation will continue to move from crisis to crisis.



**WITHOUT SERIOUS,
URGENT MEASURES,
WORKER SHORTAGES
WILL CONTINUE IN
DIFFERENT PARTS
OF THE INDUSTRY.**

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS CRISIS HAVE BEEN LAID FOR DECADES

Deregulation creates an unsustainable business model

Aviation, once a nationalised industry, has been steadily privatising for decades. While aviation today is more accessible to the world's population, it is also an industry that is environmentally, economically, and socially unsustainable.

The aviation industry today is fragile. The highly interdependent service chain that gets aircraft full of passengers and cargo safely to their destinations has been heavily fragmented. For example, a shortage of workers or faulty equipment to load luggage and cargo on to planes triggers delays and cancellations. The same is true for blockages in any other part of this chain: cleaning services, refuellers, check-in staff, mechanics, or air traffic services. No measures in any one of these services alone can achieve a successful, timely and safe operation of air services. Yet, there has been a determined trend towards fragmenting the service chain and lowering barriers of entry.

Downturns in the industry that trigger large cancellations, such as pandemics, environmental events, or political crises, send shocks through these chains. Cancellations by airlines trigger revenue losses across the service chain. The fragility and regularity of these shocks disincentivise long-term capital investments in initiatives such as equipment upgrades, worker retention and upskilling, and sustainability initiatives.

The low-cost model puts passengers and workers at risk

The pressure to lower costs to keep airlines competitive also impacts airline workers, such as pilots and cabin crew, and ripples through the service chain leading to lower wages and working conditions, reduced staffing levels, intensified work and fatigue risks, and reduced quality standards of equipment. Improvements made in one enterprise that increase costs make it uncompetitive, and low barriers of entry with minimal standards make it easy to be replaced by a cheaper enterprise delivering the same service. In an increasingly global environment, the same competitiveness between national aviation industries triggers similar consequences.

For aviation workers, the industry is now characterised by inadequate capacity, precarious employment, increased safety risks, long, unsociable working hours, increased fatigue and injuries, and declining pay.

The aviation industry is facing an unsustainable future.



**AVIATION
MUST BE
RECOGNISED
AS A PUBLIC
GOOD.**

THE ITF'S FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING AN ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION INDUSTRY

Strong regulation and industry-wide coordination

- Formation of national aviation bodies that bring together industry stakeholders, including employers, governments and unions, to ensure a resilient and safe aviation service delivery chain.
- Introduction of robust operating standards for all aviation services as a condition of entry into the industry.
- Empowerment of airport authorities to coordinate and set standards for service provision at airports.
- Inclusion of provisions that safeguard sustainable employment and high safety standards into air service agreements that regulate the operation of air traffic between nations.
- Development of sustainable funding models for aviation services, including air traffic services, that can improve the delivery of aviation's public good responsibilities while also charging for usage.
- Respect for the fundamental rights of workers including freedom of association, collective bargaining, and health and safety.
- Promotion of diversity and inclusion to eliminate unequal pay, sex discrimination and gender-based occupational segregation.

A zero-risk culture that puts health and safety first

- Elimination of all forms of violence and harassment against aviation workers by implementing the provisions of mechanisms such as Montreal Protocol 14 and ILO Convention 190 into national law.
- Promotion of a strong safety culture that introduces safety management systems including confidential reporting systems to all aviation services.
- Implementation of public awareness and worker training programmes that combat human trafficking.
- Formation of health and safety committees, such as those described in ITF's Safe Airports initiative, that include workers and employers at enterprise and worksite level, such as at airports where multiple enterprises operate in the same environment.
- Elimination of safety risks caused by precarious work, work intensification and poor mental health by:
 - Ensuring adequate staffing levels and decent conditions of employment.
 - Initiating non-punitive reporting and assistance programmes and fatigue risk management systems.
 - Developing well-funded apprenticeship, training and upskilling programmes.

A genuine pathway to a zero-carbon future industry

- Commitment to genuine carbon neutral growth beyond 2019 traffic levels.
- Embedding of aviation workers in decision making through Just Transition Committees at all levels to ensure the industry can retain the highly skilled and experienced workforce that will be crucial to identifying, developing and deploying sustainability initiatives.
- Mobilisation and coordination of investment, both public and private, with robust environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles, that develop technologies that contribute to a fossil-fuel free, environmentally sustainable aviation industry.
- Facilitation of access to technology to emerging aviation markets to ensure global equity and responsibility in the implementation of sustainability initiatives.



A digital future that works for workers and passengers

- Inclusion of workers in decision-making related to the need, development and deployment of digital technologies that complement a highly skilled, safety-critical industry and maintain the human interaction that passengers rely on.
- Workers' ownership, oversight and control of the data that they produce to enable decision-making, planning and development in the aviation industry.
- Protection against malpractice in data being used against workers in any way that penalises workers exercising their fundamental rights to freely associate and collectively bargain.
- Regular review of data processes and algorithms to ensure that they do not discriminate against workers or passengers on the grounds of their demographics.

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· WE MOVE THE WORLD ·



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION**

49-60 Borough Road
London SE11DR
+44 (0)20 7403 2733