GLOBAL LEADERS WILL ATTEND THE INAUGURAL FUTURE AVIATION FORUM IN RIYADH

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Global aviation leaders will unite in Riyadh for Saudi Arabia first-ever Future Aviation Forum. The two-day event, happening May 9th, will unite leaders from the public and business sectors, international CEOs, and regulators to shape the evolution of international air travel and drive forward solutions in a post-pandemic world.

Hosted by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), the Forum will feature more than 120 speakers, with over 2,000 attendees and representatives from every continent expected to attend. Delegates are invited to attend 40 sessions, focusing on three core thematic pillars: passenger experience, sustainability, and business recovery post-Covid.

“The Future Aviation Forum will be a pivotal moment for the global aviation sector. We will bring together the brightest minds from around the world to forge solutions for how the sector can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, transform the passenger experience, and invest in innovations that will lower carbon emissions and reduce environmental impact,” said Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Transport and Logistics.

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 to make

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Saudi Arabia a global aviation hub. GACA's National Aviation Sector Strategy (NASS) aims to increase air connectivity to 250 destinations, reaching 330 million passengers, and to double air cargo capacity to 4.5 million tons. The Kingdom also has plans to launch a new national airline to complement its existing national carriers, Saudia, Flynas and Flyadeal, and to build a major new international airport in Riyadh, in addition to eight new regional airports.

GACA is coordinating closely with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Montreal-based UN agency responsible for fostering the planning and development of the air transport industry globally. ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitanosaid the Forum comes at a critical time for the global aviation sector.

"Global cooperation across the aviation sector is needed now more than ever. We must work together to build greater resilience to future health crises, to rethink and modernize every step of the passenger journey, and to ensure the sustainability of aviation in the face of the climate emergency. I look forward to the coming together of the industry's top leaders in Riyadh at the Future Aviation Forum, where we can collaborate to drive the ambition, innovation and policymaking needed to ensure a promising future for the industry," said Sciacchitano.

As part of the broader transformation of its aviation sector, Saudi Arabia is also moving towards corporatizing its airports. Earlier this year, GACA and Matarat Holding Company announced the completion of an institutional transformation of 25 of the Kingdom's airports. This included the creation of the Airports Cluster 2 Company, which will manage and operate 22 airports, bringing oversight for construction, operation, and management under one roof. The goal is to improve service, integrate international best practices in airport management and increase competitiveness. Investment and commercial opportunities in the sector, including airports, freight, catering, maintenance and ground services, will be opened to local and foreign investors in the near future.

"The scale of opportunity for the aviation world in Saudi Arabia is unprecedented. The Future Aviation Forum is an opportunity to participate from the outset in Saudi Arabia's rapid emergence as the Middle East's preeminent aviation hub," said GACA President Abdulaziz Al-Duailej**.**

Al-Duailej said he hopes the Future Aviation Forum will facilitate business deals and mobilize the investment needed to propel the industry into the future.

"The Forum will drive business deals and mobilize funding for innovation to make the industry economically and environmentally sustainable. We invite key players from the aviation world to Saudi Arabia so that together we can drive solutions that will allow the global sector to thrive in the years to come."

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