

## **Opening Remarks by Chairman Shukuri**

for the

Civil Aviation Symposium 2023

Achieving Aviation Sustainability: Challenges and Necessary Cooperation

Good afternoon, everyone. I am Masafumi Shukuri, Chairman of the JTTRI, Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute, and of the JITTI, Japan International Transport and Tourism Institute, USA.

I would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to join today's symposium in-person and online.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Honorable Koji Tomita, Ambassador of Japan to the United States, for taking time out of his busy official schedule to attend this symposium.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to our four keynote speakers:

Ms. Annie Petsonk, Assistant Secretary, Aviation and International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation,

Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma, Senior Deputy Director General, Japan Civil Aviation Bureau at Japan's Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism,

Ms. Heidi Gomez, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs at the U.S. Department of State,

and Mr. Jeff Marootian, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the US Department of Energy.

In addition, I would like to thank all of our distinguished eight panelists:

As moderator, Mr. Steve Csonka from the Commercial Aviation Alternative Fuels Initiative (CAAIFI),

Ms. Cherie Wilson from Delta Airlines,

Mr. Tom Michels from United Airlines,

Mr. Tadashi Matsushita from All Nippon Airways,

Mr. Makoto Maezawa from Japan Airlines,

Mr. Jimmy Samartzis from LanzaJet,

Mr. Saburo Takeuchi from Mitsubishi Corporation,

and Dr. Binyam Reja from the World Bank.

In March of this year, our institute hosted a symposium in Washington D.C. as an official event for the annual Washington Cherry Blossom Festival; the theme was exchange and tourism between Japan and the United States.

This symposium emphasized the extreme importance of multi-layered and wide-ranging people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the United States in order to grow and strengthen the Japan-U.S. relationship. We had a lively and fruitful discussion on how the Japanese and American parties should proceed in the future to rebuild and strengthen these people-to-people exchanges and elevate them to a higher level.

Today's symposium is an extension of this March's discussions on how Japan and the United States should respond to climate change issues, which will be vital to achieving aviation sustainability that supports Japan-U.S exchanges.

It goes without saying that air transportation between Japan and the United States is an essential means of multi-layered and wide-ranging people-to-people exchanges in various fields such as politics, economics, academics, culture, and tourism, and that the resulting exchanges have greatly contributed to the development of Japan-US relations.

In addition, air transportation between Japan and the United States has supported the peace and stability of the entire region by connecting North America and the Indo-Pacific region via Japan, creating benefits of expanded exchanges and economic development.

In this way, the air transport between Japan and the United States, which serves as fundamental infrastructure for the economic security of the Indo-Pacific region, has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in an unprecedented manner, as you may recall.

Fortunately, since then, with the end of the pandemic, international passenger traffic has resumed, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced at its annual general meeting in June this year that global air passenger demand is expected to recover to 4.35 billion in 2023. This is 96% of the pre-pandemic figure from 2019, thus, demand is expected to return to near pre-pandemic levels.

From an economic perspective, the upward trend for air travel is very favorable; this is true for aviation business as well as for expanding international exchanges. On the other hand, from the perspective of combating climate change, an increase in the number of international flights is a major issue as it leads to an increase in CO2 emissions.

At its general meeting last October, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) agreed to an ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality in international aviation by 2050. In order to achieve this goal, further efforts will be required from all concerned parties.

At today's symposium, we will discuss the realization of carbon neutrality—which is the most pressing and important issue in the aviation field—while taking into account the importance of air transportation between Japan and the United States and its special significance for economic security. I would like to consider this issue together with you.

Finally, I hope that today's symposium will provide useful suggestions for solving the issue of climate change in the aviation sector, and that it will also encourage cooperation between Japan and the United States to solve this matter together. I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing that this will lead to further development of Japan-U.S. relations.

Thank you very much for joining us today.