

NACC Opening Remarks Aviation Day Canada by Jeff Morrison, President and CEO, National Airlines Council of Canada

Bonjour tout le monde. I'm so excited to be with you all today, and to feel the excitement in the room. I started in this role just over 2 years ago, without a background in aviation, or a full appreciation of the importance of air travel to our country and to our society. But what has become clear to me over the past 2 years is that the tens of thousands of Canadians who work in air travel are passionate for what they do, and passionate about the positive impacts they make every day. I've learned about the critical value that airlines deliver in so many different ways – whether it be connecting small communities to each other and the outside world, airlines' critical role in supply chains, the fact that airlines are an economic enabler to some many other industries, and they are Canada's gateway to the world.

And then there are the lesser known impacts that are equally impressive – for example, as crises have enveloped certain parts of the world, we should acknowledge the critical role of airlines in evacuation and humanitarian efforts. Airlines work with numerous charities and organizations to provide the means to make dreams come true. And of course, let's not forget that airlines enable grandma and grandpa to see their first born grandchild, or for a long lost reunion years in the making. In short, airlines are an indispensable force for good.

But that's rarely the portrayal of air travel in the media or in the public domain. Too often, in the media or in social media, we tend to hear more about the one off negatives, rather than the significant positives. And unfortunately we've too often seen that policy gets shaped in response to those negative headlines of the day. Of course, changes and reforms to the system are needed, and throughout today we'll hear ideas from a long list of expert speakers on how the air travel system can be and needs to be strengthened. But as we have those conversations, I'd encourage all of us not to lose sight of the enormous amount of good that Canada's air travel system delivers to Canadians each and every day.

So my hope is that you all leave here today with more information, broader perspectives, and a bigger rolodex from networking than when you walked in here this morning. (Am I showing my age when I say rolodex? I guess the kids today would say more WhatsApp contacts.)

Before turning it back over to our illustrious MC, I want to offer 2 thanks - first, I want to thank our sponsors who have made today happen. Without their support, this first Aviation Day Canada in over 10 years would not have been possible.

Be sure to say hello to our sponsor representatives who are here today. And second, I want to thank the team from IATA, with whom NACC has partnered to organize today. This event is symbolic of the strong partnership that IATA and NACC have throughout the year, so I want to thank our IATA colleagues for their efforts in making today happen.

Again, on behalf of NACC, thank you all for being here, and I look forward to a great day, great discussions, and a much better understanding of the role of airlines in our national fabric.