

## Aviation and the Environment – Amedeo Viewpoint

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In recent times, we have seen increasing focus on the role of global aviation and its impact on our environment. Protests that target aviation as an industry need to be set in context.

Today's climate protests are not about "saving our planet", the planet will survive for a few billion years, but instead are about limiting human impact on the environment in which we live today. In so doing, this will help people who will suffer from rising sea levels, bigger hurricanes and typhoons, potentially new diseases whether in New Orleans or low-lying Bangladesh and many places elsewhere. Such worthy causes we fully support and advocate strongly for. However, targeting global aviation within this positive action is misguided.

Aviation brings people together to solve problems. Climate change is but one such problem and it cannot be solved without a unified approach to it. This does not mean Heads of State flying to Paris to agree modest reductions to emissions. It is instead about promoting social mobility, common awareness and collective action. It is about inspiring visions gained through travel – the splendour of Himalayan, Alpine, or Andean glaciers, or bearing witness to the Serengeti migration – then returning home and seeking to preserve the experience, those environments, for the benefit of future generations. It is about families going on vacation and seeing single-use plastic waste on beaches, then returning home and taking positive action to limit their own impact on the environment. Aviation enables people to not only see the world but to see its problems and to respond to those problems, individually and collectively, to care about things in the same way. It would be a mistake to try to limit our capacity to bear witness to our world and to come together to solve its problems. Accessible aviation plays a positive part in climate awareness, in preventing wars, whether through people travelling on holidays, or on business, or through sending film crews far and remote to make nature documentaries or to study human impact on the furthest reaches of our planet.

Yes, there is an environmental cost to flying, as there is to breathing. Aviation today produces less than 3% of global emissions and, though this may proportionately increase in a future world that drastically reduces its consumption of fossil fuels, we should not make excuses for it. For while we can heat and cool our homes and offices and power ground transportation increasingly from renewable energy sources, there is as yet no plausible technology to allow us to power flight in this way – short perhaps of putting a nuclear reactor on an aircraft to drive electric motors to then defy gravity.

The point is that defying gravity is itself a worthy cause that brings people together and helps solve the world's problems. For now, the cost this carries is one we need to bear. Aviation has nonetheless reduced its per flying capita emissions by over 80% since the dawn of the jet age, and more is coming from improvements in air traffic control, more efficient planes and more efficient airlines with higher load factors. The industry continues to improve itself and is aware of its responsibilities.

We are proud to be a part of global aviation and see it as a force for good.