

Civil Aviation Symposium 2023

Achieving Aviation Sustainability: Challenges and Necessary Cooperation (10/5/2023)



The COVID-19 pandemic severely restricted people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the United States, while the international landscape also changed rapidly, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the environment surrounding international air transport has shifted significantly, which serves as an essential foundation for such exchanges, achieving "aviation sustainability" has become a critical challenge amid growing global uncertainty.

This symposium reaffirmed the importance of air transport between Japan and the United States, and also viewed this from the perspective of economic security. Discussions focused on climate change, which is arguable the most urgent issue facing the global aviation community, and examined its implications, the roles of public and private stakeholders, and U.S.-Japan strategies and measures for achieving sustainable aviation. Key themes from the discussion include the following:

- Air transport between Japan and the United States serves as a vital channel for multifaceted exchanges in politics, economics, academia, culture, and tourism, greatly contributing to the development of bilateral relations. Achieving the ICAO goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 will require continued, coordinated efforts from all stakeholders.
- The world faces growing uncertainty and geopolitical tension, including the pandemic's aftermath and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Even amid such challenges, maintaining and strengthening aviation connectivity remains essential to regional stability and prosperity.
- The aviation industry's energy transition poses both challenges and opportunities. The shift toward sustainable aviation offers significant economic potential for Japan, the U.S., and partners worldwide.
- The Government of Japan is prioritizing Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), promoting production capacity, stable and competitive supply systems, and clear legal targets for its use and distribution.
- Decarbonizing aviation requires stronger cooperation among governments, industries, and stakeholders. Addressing SAF cost and supply through international collaboration is key to achieving carbon neutrality.
- Expanding SAF use will depend on technological innovation, clear policy frameworks, and risk-sharing through public-private partnerships. Japan and the United States are already advancing joint efforts to drive this transition.

