



OPENING SPEECH

**H.E. Mr. Akbar Al Baker
Group Chief Executive**

AACO 54TH AGM

**10 November 2021, 20:15 – 20:25
Al Majlis Ballroom, Sheraton Doha**

H.E. Mr. Jassim bin Saif bin Ahmed Al Sulaiti, Minister of Transport.

H.E. Shk. Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qasim Al Abdullah Al-Thani, Minister of Industry and Commerce.

H.E. Mr. Mohamed bin Ali Al Mannai, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

Your Excellencies, Honourable Members of AACO, and Distinguished Colleagues.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone, and it is truly an honour to have you all here in Doha today for the Arab Air Carriers' Organization's 54th Annual General Meeting.

Let me begin by praising the work and dedication of the Arab Air Carriers' Organization (AACO) to stand always at the forefront of Arab airlines' regional and global affairs in this rapidly changing industry, where AACO was vocal about the importance of developing a single list that takes into account all the advancement in the aviation sector and the world at large.

Our region has transformed over the last 20 years as a global connecting hub, facilitating the operation of large number of flights at airports, offering passengers enhanced connectivity.

However, the COVID-19 impacted the whole world, but it hit our region, the Middle East the most. It is expected that Middle Eastern airlines are to accumulate losses of \$6.8 billion in 2021 and \$4.6 billion in 2022.

Today's event reflects how determined our industry is to re-establish connectivity and serve our customers in this new normal, as we are acutely aware of the vital role, we, the aviation industry, play in reviving the world's economies and people's lives.

The upcoming FIFA Arab Cup and the World Cup Qatar 2022, are global events organised in our region that are key drivers in the economic recovery of our industry.

The FIFA World Cup 2022 will be the first World Cup to be hosted in the Middle East and in the Arab world, and this is a unique opportunity for us to unite and show the world our signature hospitality.

As we endeavour to host these important events, we must collaborate to harmonize entry procedures and processes, while maintaining the highest level of health and safety standards to protect our passengers' well-being and assuring the safe, secure, and organized operation of aviation services, similar to what we are doing today while hosting this annual gathering.

Tomorrow, our General Assembly will address the road map and the critical elements required for the recovery of Air transport, the sustainable development of our business and most importantly, the transition to a low carbon activity which is a key element for our success. And despite the challenges that the aviation industry continues to face, we must stay unwavered in our commitment to achieving the decarbonization goals, which is a joint responsibility for civil aviation.

With that said, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you again to Doha and I wish you a pleasant stay. Thank you.

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