

Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
21st Session of the Assembly of Parties
of the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO)
(London, 12 July 2010)

1. Good morning ladies and gentlemen.
2. I appreciate the invitation to join you for your 21st General Meeting.
3. This is for me an opportunity to review highlights of the productive relationship between our two organizations and to single out current initiatives where our interests overlap.
4. As some of you may know, it all began in 1989 when Inmarsat and ICAO signed an agreement of cooperation that led, amongst other things, to the first generation of ICAO satellite communication standards.
5. With the creation of IMSO, the good relationship between our two organizations continued, as reflected by the signature in 2000 of the current ICAO-IMSO Agreement of Cooperation. It maintains the consultation and cooperation provisions of the original agreement, as well as those for reciprocal representation at each other's meetings, as observers. This is what justifies my presence here today and what will hopefully bring you to the ICAO triennial Assembly from 28 September to 8 October.

6. The fact that the current version of the IMSO Convention does not include references to ICAO or to oversight of aeronautical safety services supplied by mobile satellite service providers is related to the evolving nature of oversight functions within ICAO. In 1999, we launched a mandatory ICAO universal safety oversight audit programme. It eventually took over the oversight functions relating to compliance by States of their obligations, including those acquitted through commercial service providers, such as satellite communication service providers.
7. I view changes to the IMSO Convention as reflecting yet another dimension of the cooperation between our two organizations towards similar goals. At the 36th ICAO Assembly in 2007, IMSO informed that even under the new arrangements, IMSO continues to monitor functions common between Inmarsat's maritime and aeronautical safety services – most importantly, contingency operations capability.
8. This brings me to one of the recommendations of our very successful High-level Safety Conference held in March of this year. The Conference recommended that States make use of the regional planning processes as necessary, to encourage their air navigation service providers and operators to use available data link/satellite technology to support improved communication and surveillance over oceanic and remote areas, and to review and implement procedures for alerting key personnel, as required.

9. The High-level Safety Conference also agreed that ICAO will review Standards and Recommended Practices and guidance material to ensure that the data necessary to support search and rescue and accident investigation is available. ICAO will also assess changes which may be necessary to improve surveillance, flight monitoring and communications in oceanic airspace or in remote areas, in support of timely and adequate search and rescue services.
10. The results of a review of associated ICAO provisions and guidance material, as well as those applying to timely and adequate search and rescue – SAR – services will be communicated to States on completion. I am sure that IMSO will be interested in the findings of this review.
11. While on the subject, I would like to share with you the main message of ICAO at the recent Global Civil Aviation Search and Rescue Forum held in Abu Dhabi in June. While our ultimate goal is to reduce accidents as much as possible, it is imperative that we maintain and continually improve our ability to locate accident sites promptly and rescue individuals expeditiously. Our ability to investigate accidents and learn from them is restricted to those we can locate, which is another critical reason for ensuring effective SAR services.

12. The conference also recognized that civil aviation search and rescue requires close cooperation of many participating entities in determining policy, establishing procedures and implementing operations. IMSO has provided valuable support to ICAO by participating actively in this global Forum, which acknowledged the vital importance of communications in every aspect of aeronautical safety and search and rescue. I look forward to the continuing involvement of IMSO in future work to improve aeronautical SAR response through globally coordinated structural and organizational change.

13. In closing, I would like to reiterate that I am here to support and continue the mutually beneficial relationship between our two Organizations established over two decades ago.

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