



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO  
Mr. Raymond Benjamin  
To the First Meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation,  
Middle East Region**

*(Abu Dhabi, UAE, 22-24 March 2011)*

H.E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori Minister of Economy, Chairman of UAE GCAA, Excellencies; Directors General of Civil Aviation of the Middle East Region States; Distinguished Audience; and Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and a privilege for me to deliver the opening address to this First Meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation of the Middle East Region.

Shortly after taking up my position as Secretary General in August 2009, I made the decision, fully supported by the Council, to reduce the number of Strategic Objectives at ICAO to three.

This made it possible to concentrate all of our energies on what matters most: safety, security, environmental protection and the sustainable development of air transport, as well as support to States in their efforts to reach those objectives.

In my presentation today, I would like to illustrate some of what we have achieved, what is planned, and how we can better work together in raising the bar in all three areas.

### **Safety**

I will begin with safety, our primary responsibility.

The context for safety is that the global air transport system is arguably as safe as it has ever been. Further improvements come down to focusing on situations that present the highest levels of risk.

Runway safety is our primary safety concern. More people die from runway safety-related events than any other type of accident. Next May, we will host a Global Runway Safety Symposium for regulators, air navigation service providers, aircraft and airport operators, as well as design and manufacturing organizations. Our goal is for them to bring their collective expertise and knowledge to bear on runway safety-related issues.

During the symposium, ICAO and IATA will roll out a major update to the Runway Excursion Risk Reduction Toolkit to which all major international safety organizations have contributed.

In August, during another global meeting, we will introduce new standards for fatigue management, which are expected to be applicable in October of this year, and we will present new guidance material – one manual for regulators and one for industry.

On a more strategic level, ICAO has developed a risk management system to help prioritize the limited assistance resources available to us for reducing exposure to circumstances that pose the most risk for loss of life.

By combining this with the Safety Collaborative Assistance Network we recently established, and the new voluntary safety fund for helping States that demonstrate a commitment to improve safety, we will indeed have created a powerful assistance mechanism.

The key is commitment. We want to see concrete action and tangible results. Otherwise, all of this is just words.

Another promising avenue is the development of proactive analyses methodologies. We want to produce statistical information that will compel decision-makers to take action on safety risks before they result in accidents – and not wait for accidents to occur before initiating changes.

One innovation which will have a major impact is the ICAO Integrated Safety Trend Analysis and Reporting system, or iSTARS. iSTARS provides crucial information to guide policy decisions and prioritize the use of limited safety resources.

Obviously, obtaining the required information, quickly and efficiently, is critical. I am happy to report to you today that ICAO has completed the development of a Global Safety Information Exchange mechanism and system. This initiative is the result of an information-sharing agreement we signed at the Assembly last fall with the European Commission, the U.S. Department of Transportation and IATA. This collaboration will connect our four organizations as never before and increase regulatory efficiency worldwide. More importantly, it will save lives.

As we move forward, we will continue to emphasize safety management practices through the implementation of Safety Management Systems for service providers and the State Safety Programme for regulators.

How all of what I have just described fits together to improve aviation safety worldwide will be outlined in a revision to ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan planned for the end of the year, along with ICAO's first Global Aviation Safety Report.

Having said this, we have to ensure that we have sufficient qualified personnel to manage these activities and systems.

In a study ICAO released just two weeks ago, we show that from now to 2030, more than two million jobs will become available for pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers. This is a consequence of retirements and the growth of commercial air transport.

The problem is that the current training facilities will not be sufficient to meet the demand and that we could face a shortfall equivalent to some 560,000 positions.

A Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Symposium convened last year by ICAO outlined a strategy for the recruitment, training and retention of aviation professionals. A follow-up event planned for April 2012 should help us consolidate and expand the strategy for dealing with this issue. This will go a long way in producing a coordinated approach to bridging the gap.

## Security

Let me now turn to security.

Terrorist attacks using aviation are particularly spectacular and shocking. The potential for substantial and costly disruptions are enormous for aviation operations, the air transport industry, business and leisure travel markets, and freight shipments. Most of all, they kill and injure people.

Even when acts of terrorism are intercepted and disrupted, they can have significant impacts on States' agendas, on the prosperity of the industry, and on the confidence of travellers and shippers.

Moreover, threats to aviation have become more complex. They evolve rapidly and all components of the air transport system are potential targets.

Effective security regimes must be smart, cohesive, multi-layered and well-supported and sustained, with high consistency and compatibility among travel and trade partners. Terrorists seek vulnerabilities anywhere in the global network. They do not respect borders. All States have a vested interest in a global web of effective security regimes.

I agree with those who say that we have improved over the past decade. We can better anticipate, detect, intercept and protect against attacks. We can also respond more appropriately when attacks occur or are attempted. But as recent events have shown, we must continually reinforce and adapt our strategy.

That is the message that came out of the Assembly last fall, when Member States unanimously adopted a Declaration on Aviation Security in which they reaffirmed their commitment to work collaboratively and proactively, especially in addressing new and emerging threats to the security of civil aviation.

The Declaration focuses on four main target areas: enhanced screening technologies to detect prohibited articles, strengthening international standards, improving security information-sharing and providing capacity-building assistance to States in need.

In each of these areas, ICAO is providing leadership by facilitating implementation and global coordination.

To strengthen security procedures, we are collaborating with the industry in the development of a blueprint for an airport checkpoint of the future and improved screening processes.

Concerning air cargo, the Council in November approved an amendment to Annex 17 which includes new and strengthened Standards which will become applicable in July. Among them is a requirement for States to establish a supply chain security process for air cargo.

On this point, we are cooperating with the World Customs Organization to achieve the highest level of end-to-end cargo security, while preventing unnecessary delays in the movement of goods across international boundaries.

We will focus our resources and attention on Member States with the greatest need for assistance in meeting their obligations, to establish sustainable security regimes and oversight systems.

Last month, in New Delhi, I kicked off the first in a series of regional conferences that will develop roadmaps to implement the Declaration on Aviation Security. Among the measures adopted are actions that States will take to strengthen security screening procedures by ensuring that professionals are appropriately trained and equipped. Air cargo security will be enhanced through working with Customs authorities on common goals. Capacity-building assistance to States, in cooperation with ICAO, other States and the aviation industry, was emphasized in the roadmap which can serve as a model for other regional aviation security conferences.

I look forward to such a conference in the Middle East prior to this time next year at a location to be determined. The process will culminate in a global security conference planned for next year at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal.

### **Environment**

In much the same way that security is a global problem that requires global solutions, so does climate change.

At the Assembly, Member States adopted a resolution which made ICAO the first United Nations Agency to lead a sector in the establishment of a globally harmonized agreement for addressing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Resolution includes a global goal of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to the year 2050 and stabilizing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the 2020 levels. It also calls for facilitating the development and generalized use of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation and agreeing on a target date of 2013 for the development of a global CO<sub>2</sub> certification standard for aircraft.

The agreement on voluntary submission of States' national action plans to ICAO is part of the shift of the Organization from "standard setting" to "implementation". The action plans will allow States to identify how they can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international aviation and what assistance they may need. This will allow ICAO to monitor the progress towards the achievement of global aspirational goals and to address specific needs of States.

In this connection, ICAO will hold a series of five regional workshops from May to July 2011 to assist its Member States in preparing their national action plans and submitting them to ICAO. A workshop for Middle East Member States is being planned for June 2011.

Finally, we are looking to COP17 in Durban, South Africa at the end of this year to deliver an agreement that acknowledges ICAO's progress and encourages its member States to work further through ICAO towards the sustainable future of international aviation.

### **Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just outlined some of the main accomplishments and plans for ensuring the safety, the security and the sustainable development of international civil aviation.

Let me add that even before I joined ICAO, I had a vision of an Organization that was efficient, action oriented, motivated by performance and results, and fully at the service of its Member States.

With the assistance of the Council, we produced a realistic budget, a more streamlined organizational structure and programmes in line with the realities of the aviation sector and the needs of States.

I now look to you for support in realizing that vision.

This first DGCA conference for the Middle East is a unique opportunity to do just that, in a spirit of cooperation with all stakeholders of the aviation.

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