



ICAO

Opening Remarks by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Mr. Raymond Benjamin  
to the EU Heads of Mission Meeting

*(Ottawa, Canada, 26 June 2014)*

1. Good morning everyone.
2. Please let me begin today by expressing my thanks to Mrs. Marie-Anne Coninx, Ambassador to the EU Delegation to Canada, for her kind invitation to speak to you on this occasion.
3. As some of you may be aware, ICAO is a United Nations specialized agency which was created in 1944 upon the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention.
4. ICAO works with the Convention's 191 Member States, in addition to industry observers and other international organizations, to develop international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for the global air transport sector.
5. Unless they notify of a difference in writing in accordance with Article 38 of the Chicago Convention, our Member States must meet these Standards when they develop or amend their national regulations and programmes.
6. There are currently over 10,000 international Standards and Recommended Practices reflected in the 19 Annexes to the Chicago Convention. It is through these provisions – as well as ICAO's complementary policy, auditing and capacity-building efforts – that the air transport system today is able to operate just under 100,000 daily commercial flights, safely and securely, in every world region.

7. ICAO Assemblies, held every three years, endorse the work programme and budget of ICAO as well as the triennial Strategic Objectives decided by ICAO's 36 State Governing Council. The 38th Assembly Session, held last October, adopted five Strategic Objectives for ICAO through 2016. These are:
  - Safety, which is always a fundamental objective;
  - Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, which underscores the significant challenges posed by the projected doubling in size of the air transport system by 2030;
  - Security and Facilitation enhancement, stressing the need to secure but not obstruct the movement of passengers and goods;
  - Economic Development of Air Transport, fostering the development of a sound and economically viable civil aviation system;
  - and lastly Environmental Protection, which encompasses our inter-related efforts towards both emissions and noise reduction.
8. All of these activities help ICAO to keep air services available and dependable in every world region, which in turn supports improved social and economic development by enhancing connectivity between citizens and businesses.
9. In 2013 alone, our sector carried over 3.1 billion passengers on more than 32 million flights, as well as roughly 50 million tonnes of air cargo representing one-third of the value of all international trade.
10. Looking at our Strategic Objectives in more detail, two of the 38th Assembly's more important endorsements related to **Safety** and **Capacity and Efficiency**, and more specifically to ICAO's recently revised *Global Aviation Safety Plan* and *Global Air Navigation Plan*.
11. The complementary ICAO *Global Plans* feature extensive industry and Member State agreement and input, thereby providing an unprecedented level of investment certainty with respect to aircraft and air navigation system modernization.

12. Progress on the *Global Plans* targets will be measured from this point forward, mainly in ICAO's annual *Safety Report* and, beginning this year, an annual *Air Navigation Report*. The 2014 editions of these publications are presently available free of charge on our website.
13. In early May, ICAO additionally launched a set of web-based online monitoring tools where our stakeholders can now keep track of their incremental progress on specific regional goals.
14. Better monitoring, analysis and reporting greatly assists our sector in determining strategic priorities, eventually helping to set in motion initiatives like the ICAO Runway Safety Programme and other cooperative ventures.
15. Collaboration with the EU and bodies such as EASA and Eurocontrol continue to be instrumental to the tremendous results we are seeing with this work. Let me please stress ICAO's deep appreciation for the important resources and assistance your States and agencies continue to provide in this regard.
16. Another important area of recent collaboration for ICAO relates to the priorities we've established in conjunction with IATA on the development of a global airline flight tracking capability. These actions of course having been driven by the unprecedented loss and disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370.
17. ICAO's Special Meeting in early May established that both States and industry agree that an airline flight tracking capability is required, that ICAO should begin considering the merits of a performance-based International Standard for flight tracking, and furthermore that, under an ICAO framework, contributions from industry through IATA's Aircraft Tracking Task Force (ATTF) will serve to address this requirement on a near-term basis.
18. There are many other priority areas we are seeking to address in the *Safety* and *Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency* domains, including commercial spaceflight and the civilian use of remotely-piloted aircraft systems, or drones as they are more commonly referred to, but as our time today is limited let us now move on to ICAO's further objectives.

19. In the area of ***Security and Facilitation***, ICAO is working to achieve greater balance between effective control measures and the assurance of overall system efficiency – whether for passengers or air cargo. Subsequently, risk-based prioritization, the mutual recognition of equivalent security measures, and other key principles will strongly support all of our *Security and Facilitation* discussions in ICAO.
20. Our States have also endorsed the proposal that ICAO should build upon its recognized achievements in the global implementation of machine-readable travel documents, and that we should expand this work into a more comprehensive programme covering the complete identity establishment and management chain.
21. I had the opportunity to brief the UN Security Council on this work earlier this year and ICAO's presentation was very well received.
22. The Assembly's consensus on these issues means that ICAO and its States will be placing increased emphasis moving forward on assuring uniform and consistent implementation of sustainable aviation security measures worldwide – something I strongly believe should be a top priority.
23. Turning now to the ***Economic Development of Air Transport***, ICAO has been encouraged that a growing number of States are looking to our Organization to take a leading role in modernizing the economic regulatory framework governing air transport liberalization, while safeguarding fair competition.
24. An important economic priority for air transport will be to maximize efficiency in border and customs clearance operations to promote trade, tourism and economic development. This ties in closely with our *Security & Facilitation* goals and to the wider concept of enhancing air transport connectivity – which encompasses not only the streamlining of airport clearances, but also the protection of air transport consumer interests.
25. It is ICAO's position that air transport end-users should be protected and that these protections would benefit from increased regulatory convergence and compatibility.

26. Our 38th Assembly also recognized that guidance on the impact of taxation and other charges on air transport must be a priority for ICAO. Too often, aviation revenues are re-directed to non-aviation programmes through an ever-expanding regime of State taxes and levies.
27. ICAO's view is that low-tax approaches deliver more significant long-term benefits to States, mainly through increased local employment, expanded global markets for local producers, and from the expanded tax base which results from all of this increased economic activity.
28. In the area of ***Environmental Protection***, ICAO and its Member States have been actively engaged on a comprehensive strategy to address CO2 emissions from international aviation.
29. A key area of our environmental work relates to a 'basket' of mitigation measures, including aircraft technology and operational improvements, sustainable alternative fuels, and of course a market-based measure (MBM) suitable to international civil aviation operations.
30. Much of this technical work is pursued through ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection or CAEP as we refer to it, and please let me take a moment to thank you and your States for the invaluable support provided to this Committee by EU experts.
31. Another area of ICAO environmental work I wish to highlight relates to the development and implementation of our Member States' action plans to reduce CO2 emissions from international aviation, mainly through assistance and capacity building. To date, plans representing over 80 per cent of global international air traffic have been submitted to ICAO.
32. As part of ICAO's efforts to expand this assistance and facilitate access to financing supporting State action plan development and implementation, ICAO established a partnership with the European Commission during our 38th Assembly last fall. We have since confirmed 14 States, 12 from Africa and two from the Caribbean, who will benefit from the EC project.
33. The development of a global MBM scheme for international aviation was also endorsed by the 38th Assembly, a decision which I'm sure many of you here are quite familiar with. ICAO was very much encouraged by the European Parliament vote in early April of this year, where European States voted in favour of a compromise agreement and a resumption of the 'Stop the Clock' approach.

34. Stop the Clock will be in place from 2013 until the end of 2016, when the next ICAO Assembly must determine an agreement to implement a global market-based mechanism from 2020.
35. To help ensure this agreement is reached, and thereby avoid resumption of the full ETS provisions as of 2017, the ICAO Council established a clearly-defined roadmap in February of this year.
36. It has also established an Environment Advisory Group (EAG) which has been making progress on a global scheme using an iterative approach, in order to ensure the full engagement of States and concerned air transport stakeholders.
37. Ladies and gentlemen, in closing today, let me please draw your attention to the fact that on 7 December this year, ICAO will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the signing of the *Chicago Convention*.
38. We have been proud during this period to be the primary forum where governments and industry meet on civil aviation matters, but we also clearly recognize that we must continue to adapt our governance and working methods to the modern needs of both States and operators.
39. Let me also add in closing that ICAO very much respects the leadership and determined commitment being demonstrated by EU States on matters relating to climate change and emissions mitigation. However we must also acknowledge the lessons learned during our first 70 years, and be mindful of the fact that – where international civil aviation is concerned – global consensus has always delivered our most enduring and successful progress.
40. Thank you.

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