



ICAO

Keynote Speech:

***Confronting Emerging and Strategic Challenges:
ICAO's 2015 High Level Safety Conference Outcomes***

**Presented by the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Raymond Benjamin,
for the Beijing International Forum on Civil Aviation Safety**

(Beijing, China, 23 April 2015)

1. Thank you and good morning everyone.
2. International civil aviation came face-to-face with two very high-profile emerging safety and security issues in 2014, issues characterized by distinct challenges which ICAO and the global air transport community have been very focused on in recent months.
3. And while we have benefitted from a number of important lessons learned in the aftermath of the tragic losses of MH370 and MH17 last year, it is nonetheless equally critical to keep these incidents, and the actions we are taking to address them, in proper perspective with respect to our wider strategic planning.
4. But to begin with today, let's first review what MH370 and MH17 have taught us to this point.
5. Perhaps first among the lessons learned from these two incidents, and especially MH370, is the recognition that our sector must respond rapidly, even to extremely rare accident events in our network, when there is a question of public trust involved.
6. Looking at MH370 for instance, you will recall from the media frenzy it generated terms such as "unprecedented" and "mysterious" in relation to its disappearance. In fact, the chances of another flight vanishing as MH370 are basically one-in-100-million.
7. And yet, as soon as it became apparent that this was no ordinary accident, and that the public's trust in the safety and effectiveness of our network had been called into question, ICAO, ACI, CANSO and IATA rapidly convened a high-level meeting to discuss an appropriate sectoral response.
8. Ultimately, two parallel Task Forces were established, featuring the participation of State and industry experts. Less than one year later, the findings and recommendations of these bodies were brought before the 36-State ICAO Council, and then subsequently all our Member States during our High Level Safety Conference last February.
9. In response to the MH370 incident, the major outcome of the High Level Safety Conference was support for a new 15-minute flight-tracking standard.
10. This development represents a critical first step in the implementation of ICAO's more comprehensive Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System, or GADSS. Over time the GADSS will also call for international provisions leading to greater tracking frequency and precision under abnormal or distress flight conditions.
11. ICAO is also leading a global aircraft tracking implementation initiative at present, in order to demonstrate the best use of existing technologies and capabilities.

12. A dozen or more world airlines and a range of aircraft types are expected to participate in these exercises, which will take place here in the Asia-Pacific Region in light of its available airspace.
13. With respect to MH17 and conflict zones, the Safety Conference's main recommendation was for ICAO to develop and host a centralized online repository where States, operators and applicable organizations could share up-to-date conflict zone risk information.
14. The ICAO Council subsequently endorsed this recommendation and, as of early April, access to the repository for registered users has been readily available on the homepage of the ICAO website.
15. I highlighted a moment ago that the progress on the issues relating to MH370 and MH17 was achieved less than one year after these incidents took place.
16. Those of you who are more familiar with global aviation governance will recognize that this amount of progress, in just a matter of months, represents a truly significant achievement.
17. But what I wish to point out, especially in light of the topic I am addressing today, is that these decisions are not indicative of our sector simply putting out the latest fire it has encountered, or running from one emergency to another.
18. In this case specifically, ICAO had already formulated performance planning and technology roadmaps that would have realized a global flight tracking capability for aviation.
19. These outcomes emerged out of the comprehensive consultations we conducted with States and industry between 2011 and 2013, a process perhaps best exemplified by our successful Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium in 2011, when over 500 industry participants joined us at ICAO.
20. We undertook all of this work in connection with the 2013 revision of our *Global Air Navigation Plan*, or GANP. As you know the GANP, together with its companion document the *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP), are ICAO's chief response to the need for long-term strategic planning for global aviation safety and efficiency.
21. The comprehensive GANP consultations I just described were pursued because projections were already telling us that our sector would once again be doubling in capacity by 2030 – just as it had during two previous 15-year cycles going back to 1977.
22. ICAO recognized and prioritized the capacity challenges which would be facing our States, and related concerns have been guiding much of our strategic planning ever since. For example separate projections on skilled personnel shortages and shortfalls in regional training capacity led directly to my establishment last year of a new Global Aviation Training office in ICAO.
23. I could provide you with many more examples in this regard, but staying focused on the matters at hand I wish only to stress that our responses to MH370 and MH17, while very rapid, were not made in the absence of strategic considerations.
24. The loss of these aircraft simply accelerated the implementation of one aspect of the GANP's Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBUs), which as you know set-outs detailed and integrated performance improvement planning sector-wide through 2028.
25. This in part is why we are describing the 15-minute tracking requirement for 2016 as a 'foundation' or 'first-step' with respect to a more comprehensive tracking capability which will eventually be realized.

26. Aviation would of course be very grateful to learn more about what caused the loss of MH370. Accident investigations and the reports they result in, all under the Chicago Convention's Annex 13 framework, reliably provide important findings and recommendations which help us to prevent future accidents and save lives.
27. Having analyzed this and other safety data for many years now, and working collaboratively with industry operators to share accident information and results, our sector has identified three high-fatality accident categories which we are now working on collaboratively. These are:
 - Runway incursions and excursions.
 - Controlled Flight into Terrain, or CFIT.
 - And lastly, Loss of Control Inflight (LOCI).
28. These efforts have seen some clear results. Runway-related fatalities have decreased from 179 in 2010 to just one in 2014. Similarly, we have seen the CFIT fatality rate drop by almost 85 per cent. The number of LOCI accidents, meanwhile, has been cut in half over the same period.
29. These are not the results or objectives of a sector in crisis. They are the product of determined and strategic planning and collaboration, and that is precisely how States and industry, through ICAO, will continue in the years ahead to make aviation even safer.
30. The other global challenges we have in common – including aviation security and facilitation, air navigation capacity and efficiency, environmental protection, and the economic development of air transport – will likewise require a unified approach supported by practical implementation assistance.
31. And for the Asia and Pacific Region specifically, the overall challenge is by far the consequences of sustained growth in passenger and cargo traffic.
32. Well over nine million flights were managed safely and efficiently in this Region during 2014, making the Asia/Pacific the world's largest air travel market with a 31 per cent share in terms of world Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPKs).
33. China alone has more than doubled its air traffic since 2004 and now accounts for 12 per cent of global flights.
34. This type of growth is only possible, and sustainable, where States and industry partners have implemented effective safety measures.
35. Accomplishments of this magnitude cannot arise without a significant level of commitment to the safety of air transport operations, and your local achievements in this regard are truly to be commended. I am certain that this trend will only continue, and in that regard further collaboration and consensus, through ICAO, will continue to be your best path forward.

36. But the implications of the rate of this growth are multiple and interrelated, as we well know. They point to the need for continued diligence and commitment on behalf of all Asia-Pacific aviation safety stakeholders, so that together you may continue to meet the challenges of :
- Increased airspace and airport congestion.
 - Growing environmental pressures.
 - The need for massive investments in ground infrastructure and air navigation systems.
 - Potential economic risks and the long-term viability of airline or airport operators.
 - Levels of training and experience for skilled personnel.
 - And many other concerns more specific to your local markets and organizations.
37. I have also noted with interest the attention to Human Factors that is on your agenda for this meeting. In an increasingly complex system, the contribution of human performance to aviation safety and efficiency is critical, something which the Germanwings Flight 9525 incident has made all the more apparent.
38. Let me add here in relation to this tragic event that ICAO has been seeking to draw greater attention to the importance of mental health assessments for licensed aviation personnel since 2009, and that we will continue to do so.
39. But we must also remain aware that determining mental health to any practical extent is a very complex medical challenge, and that airlines, pilots and others can only react to what the best medical approaches provide us with.
40. Ladies and gentlemen, this will likely be my last opportunity to address you as Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization. In closing today I wish to underline that it has been my great honour to serve ICAO, and the global air transport sector it supports, for so many years now.
41. I wish all of my friends and colleagues here only the greatest successes in your private and professional lives in the years ahead, and trust that your discussions at this Beijing International Forum on Civil Aviation Safety will deliver important and productive contributions to your common goals.

Thank you.
