



First-ever ICAO event on promoting common international approach to support for aircraft accident victims

For immediate release

Montréal and Las Palmas, Spain, 1 December 2021 – ICAO convened its first-ever international *Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* today, providing an important platform to enhance global cooperation toward their care and treatment.

The three-day event is being hosted by Spain, and features the attendance and participation of its Secretary General for Transport and Mobility (MITMA), María José Rallo, its Director General of Civil Aviation, Raúl Medina Caballero, and its Representative on the ICAO Council, Víctor M. Aguado. Also in attendance will be dignitaries from the Government of the Canary Islands and Grand Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, as well as ICAO's Secretary General, Juan Carlos Salazar, and other ICAO officials and experts.

In his welcome address, ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano remarked that “Respect for victims of civil aviation accidents and the mental, physical and spiritual well-being of their families is of paramount importance to ICAO, and we work diligently to ensure that these needs are considered and accommodated by States.”

Secretary General Salazar meanwhile stressed in his opening remarks that “Aviation safety is an incredible team effort, but this same cooperation must also be directed toward ensuring the rights of accident victims and their families in the aftermath of these tragic events.”

ICAO first issued guidance on family assistance in 2001, and in 2013 it published the *ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* and an accompanying manual. The topic was also formally acknowledged by countries at consecutive ICAO Assemblies, in 2013 and 2016, and considered by a special session of the 13th ICAO Air Navigation Conference in 2018.

Earlier this year the ICAO Council held a further meeting on the subject with the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International (ACVFFI), and in a related development, the ICAO Facilitation Panel has recently recommended that associated priorities be enshrined in a full ICAO Standard, in order to assure stronger international compliance and alignment.

In addition to the Symposium now underway, ICAO is currently developing a training course to help countries set out appropriate family assistance legislation, regulations, and plans.

Mr. Sciacchitano also announced at the event that the ICAO Council has very recently approved the establishment of 20 February as a new international day for the commemoration of lives that have been lost due to aircraft accidents.

Both ICAO leaders recognized the invaluable dedication and contributions of the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International towards the international prioritization of these issues, and expressed ICAO's deep appreciation to the Governments of Spain and the Canary Islands for making the event possible.



The ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families opened in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, on 1 December 2021, and was attended by (from left to right) Mr. Augusto Hidalgo Macario, Mayor of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Mr. Antonio Morales Méndez, President of Gran Canaria Council; Mr. Ángel Víctor Torres, President of the Government of the Canary Islands; Mr. Victor M. Aguado, Permanent Representative of Spain to the ICAO Council; Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, ICAO Secretary General; Ms. María José Rallo, Secretary General for Transport and Mobility of Spain's Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (MITMA); Mr. Raúl Medina Caballero, Spain's Director General of Civil Aviation Administration; and Mr. Rafael Vidal Rodríguez, survivor of the JK5022 accident, Engineer and member of the JK5022 Association

Resources for Editors

[Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families](#)

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created by governments in 1944 to support their diplomacy on international air transport matters. Since that time, countries have adopted over 12,000 standards and practices through ICAO which help to align their national regulations relevant to aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, enabling a truly global network to be realized. ICAO forums also provide opportunities for advice and advocacy to be shared with government decision-makers by industry groups, civil society NGOs, and other officially-recognized air transport stakeholders.

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