



**Opening remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN) Event**

(Bogotá, Colombia - 6 December 2021)

1. It is a great honour for ICAO to be able to host this event here in Bogota, and an even bigger personal honour for me to be opening it alongside President Marquez, Minister Gomez, and Director General Fajardo.
2. I'm sure you all join me in appreciating how such distinguished participation on behalf of Colombia reflects the very high level of priority this country places on the vitality and ICAO-compliance of its international air transport capacities.
3. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Government and people of Colombia for hosting this year's ICAN, and providing us with these excellent facilities and hospitality.
4. This year's ICAN is the first to be organized in the South America region since ICAO began hosting these events, in 2008.
5. Another first for ICAN 2021 has seen States provided with hybrid options so that you can participate and conduct your negotiations virtually, or in person.
6. We've been very encouraged to see that almost 400 delegates, from over 60 ICAO Member States, have joined us to take advantage of these new options this year.
7. These totals are very much in line with ICAO participation levels pre-pandemic, and we've been very encouraged to acknowledge similar small signs of air transport recovery arising lately, and in every world region.

8. ICAO has been working to identify and augment these trends, with a focus on reconnecting the world, and beginning tomorrow, on International Civil Aviation Day, we'll be launching a joint communications campaign with the World Tourism Organization focused around this theme.
9. The work you undertake in these ICAN events is critical to all aspects of ICAO's current air transport recovery objectives, as well as to the future sustainable growth and resilience we are working so hard to achieve in terms of international aviation's post-COVID environment.
10. Despite some stagnation and volatility over 2021, noticeable improvements in air traffic have been observed at the global level, and especially here in Colombia.
11. While your international departures fell by 92 percent at the onset of the pandemic, as of last month some 60 percent of this lost capacity had already been restored.
12. Domestic traffic recovery here has been even more remarkable, with flight totals actually surpassing pre-pandemic levels in seven out of ten months in 2021.
13. Together these results serve to highlight for us what governments can achieve by working together on the basis of consistent and evidence based policies for public health and international air transport.
14. This priority was clearly recognized by the States that participated at ICAO's High-level Conference on COVID-19 this past October, an event we specifically designed and scheduled to help accelerate recovery momentum with new global commitments.
15. The countries at the HLCC fully lived up to these expectations, and they did so by:
 - Generating a comprehensive international review of pandemic-driven priorities;
 - Formalizing new commitments on opening international borders through updated risk management and vaccination approaches;
 - And agreeing that aviation must build back better to address the elimination of emissions and future pandemic resilience.
16. Of all the lessons this pandemic has taught us, one of the most important has been that no country can address it in isolation.
17. Multilateralism and the work you'll embark on here in the next few days continue to be essential to global success, and to the restoration of global travel and trade capacities in all world regions.

18. With this in mind, there are several priorities you should stay especially cognizant of over the next few days.
19. The first of these is the liberalization of market access for airlines, and the removal of barriers to access wider capital markets with relaxed nationality requirements for airlines' ownership.
20. I would note here that ICAO's Air Transport Regulation Panel, at the request of our last Assembly, is now working on a new *Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines* to help support related progress.
21. A second area of key priority for you to consider is effective regulatory practices supported by good governance.
22. ICAO will also be supporting these considerations by the end of this year, with a new OECD study we've commissioned on air transport governance in Caribbean and South American States.
23. Thirdly, due focus must also be placed on the modernization of infrastructure and passenger facilitation processes, as well as toward the traditional harmonization and convergence of regulatory approaches.
24. Lastly, all of the above must be accompanied by a solid national competition and consumer protection framework, and by local compliance with ICAO guidance on the economic regulation of international air transport, and in particular with respect to taxes, charges, and fees.
25. ICAO has maintained a firm commitment to work with States towards a long-term vision for international air transport liberalization, and I assure you that it will only be reinforced under my leadership.
26. In concluding today, I wish to thank again the Government of Colombia, and especially Director General Fajardo and his team, for their invaluable contributions to the organization of this event.
27. I would also stress that all of us share a solemn duty today to help restore air travel and trade and reconnect our world, so that millions of people can have their livelihoods restored, and we can once again put the world on track to increased global connectivity and prosperity.
28. I am deeply honoured to be leading ICAO at this critical moment, and I thank you all again for coming here this week to help progress these important efforts.

29. Thank you.