



**Opening Address
by ICAO Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the 2021 ICAO/ACI Obstacle Limitation
Surfaces Symposium (OLSS2021)**

(Virtual event, 8 December 2021)

Good morning, afternoon, and evening, ladies and gentlemen.

1. It's my great pleasure to welcome you to this ICAO/ACI Obstacle Limitation Surfaces Symposium, and to introduce some of the key topics you'll be addressing in the coming days.
2. Please allow me to start by thanking ACI once again for collaborating with ICAO on organizing another important outreach event for the stakeholder community, promoting the innovative development to update our international standards to be implemented at aerodromes.
3. As we continue to support the near-term air transport recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is a tremendous challenge, it's important as well to keep our longer-term strategic objectives in safety, efficiency and environment clearly in focus.
4. Building this sector back better will require our aviation sector and industry to be made more resilient to future pandemic events.
5. It will also require everyone to work as one to continuously reduce sectoral emissions, even as traffic volumes return to their new normal.
6. But for these longer-term priorities to be achievable, we first need to manage through the next critical phases of recovery.

7. Even though we're now faced with an operational environment of unprecedented financial and resource challenges, for regulators and operators alike, our network must become more agile and responsive than ever before, so that capacity can be made quickly available when and where it's needed.
8. The topic that you'll be addressing here over the next three days encompasses many of these factors I've just mentioned.
9. Obstacle limitation surfaces protect aircraft approaching or departing airports from terrain, buildings, and other structures, and they need to take into consideration the operational characteristics and requirements for both arrival and departure routes.
10. As they exist today, however, these invisible surfaces have been based on performance characteristics for a previous generation of aircraft, and with much less capable avionics.
11. Today's aircraft, in contrast, can climb more quickly, perform continuous descent or curved approaches, and in general demonstrate much more advanced performance and capability.
12. This means that they are also much quieter, and less likely to experience engine or other failures, expanding our options for safer and more efficient approach paths or departure routes.
13. This presents us with an opportunity to revisit obstacle limitation surfaces on the basis of a more performance-based approach – one which will enable **both safer and greener** operations around airports for many years to come.
14. There is also a valuable opportunity now before us to make the management of obstacles more collaborative, enabling a more balanced use of air space and ground space, and for urban planning and development to be better integrated with aviation needs.
15. All-in-all these developments have the potential to deliver us a win for aviation, a win for cities and the public, and a win for the environment.

16. This Symposium is an important milestone in our efforts to drive a comprehensive review of the new OLS methodology, which has been developed by the experts on ICAO's *Aerodrome Design and Operations Panel*.
17. For the last six years, the Panel has been working on developing a new set of proposals which must now be discussed and reviewed on a much broader basis. And that's why we have city and urban planners and other non-aviation stakeholders joining this event as well.
18. This feedback will then help to inform the formal ICAO review and approval process, culminating in the issuance of new OLS standards.
19. Through your engagements with the presentations and discussions to be conducted here over the next three days, ICAO hopes to understand where more explanation may be required, and if any changes may need to be suggested.
20. Through a series of case studies you'll also learn more about how the new OLS proposals can be implemented in real-world settings, and about the concrete benefits which can be achieved.
21. This event does not represent the end of the consultation process.
22. There will be further consultative opportunities through the State letters ICAO issues for countries to provide feedback, and through the formal and detailed final reviews to be conducted by ICAO's Air Navigation Commission and the Council.
23. Looking to the future, ICAO's next priorities will be to assure that the new OLS methodology which results from this process is well-understood and uniformly applied.
24. ICAO will conduct further outreach, and develop training and other support activities, on the basis of productive partnerships with States and industry bodies.
25. In concluding now, I would strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of this platform and to actively participate and contribute with your valuable inputs and feedback. And together with ACI, I wish you all a very interesting and productive symposium.

26. Thank you.