



Keynote Address
by the Secretary General of ICAO,
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the ICAO/EASA Strengthening Regional Cooperation Conference

(Virtual/Online, 20 January 2022)

1. Please allow me to start by thanking Mr. Ky and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) for collaborating with ICAO on organizing another important outreach event for the stakeholder community.
2. Our goal together here will be to promote the innovative enhancement and application of regional solutions in support of improved SARP implementation in States.
3. While Omicron has dealt a setback to the aviation recovery we began seeing last year, I'm very hopeful today that the world will be well on its way back to normal in a few months' time, and that international air transport will once again be playing its key role in the global economic recovery.
4. ICAO's High-level Conference on COVID-19 last October was designed to augment that recovery, and one of its more important components was a dedicated agenda item on regional cooperation.
5. In both the Safety and Facilitation streams, the important response and recovery contributions being made by Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), in addition to similar mechanisms such as the COSCAPs, was very clearly emphasized.
6. RSOO contributions in particular have included dedicated airport guidance based on the Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations, regional regulatory harmonization, and many other initiatives that we will doubtless hear more about during this conference.

7. To build on recent RSOO successes and contributions, and assure that they have the support they require, the HLCC further recommended that ICAO should expand and evolve its RSOO Cooperative Platform.
8. We're eager to get started on that, and this conference's discussions and outcomes will very importantly inform those efforts.
9. In addition, I think we'd benefit from a review of how these same principles could potentially benefit the new RAIO cooperative platform which we recently established.
10. As we continue to work collaboratively to confront the pandemic, a **key priority** we share is to manage and assure the safe recovery of normal operations.
11. This includes the path from standards alleviations back to full ICAO compliance, and despite the current environment where industry, and the regulators which oversee it, face unparalleled financing and resource challenges.
12. **A second key priority** for us going forward will be to assure a modernized recovery for this sector, addressing both aviation safety and public health priorities in the aviation system.
13. The aviation safety domain had already been generating very high levels of innovation, even before the pandemic, and active engagement with industry will be crucial if we're to enable the new technologies and solutions needed.
14. This explains why one of the key objectives of this conference is to encourage industry to more actively support regional organizations, so that we can proactively address the gaps that can be created when new technologies or methods are introduced.
15. **A third key priority** we need to keep in mind as we embark on these discussions is the sustainability of regional cooperation frameworks.

16. Successful regional cooperation measures have always faced sustainability challenges, even when they are very successful. An early example was the Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC) which successfully organized a multinational team of experts to meet its mandate within emerging Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the 1990s.
17. In the current climate, even national regulators are facing funding challenges within their own governments, and very obviously this challenge is compounded for regional organizations dependent on multi-State commitments and support.
18. But at the same time States-in-need also become more reliant on regional cooperation mechanisms when times are tougher than expected, so clearly we need a solution to keeping RSOOs both capable and well-resourced, and under any circumstances.
19. The challenge of sustainability for RSOOs also refers to the capacities and expertise they maintain to be able to leverage the latest innovations.
20. Here too, industry must be a key player to ensure countries are up to the challenge.
21. The discussions in store for us will address many of these priorities, and in the not-too-distant future I envisage an effective and dependable network of highly capable RSOOs and RAIOS, one supported by a resilient partnership and commitment structure among States, industry, regional economic communities, and financial institutions.
22. As we continue to work together toward that outcome, I would like to appreciate how important it will be for EASA to remain an actively engaged partner with ICAO.
23. EASA has helped to set the global bar for what it means to be an efficient and effective regional aviation organization.
24. Furthermore, its committed advocacy for regional cooperation has been nothing short of instrumental to the establishment of the Global Aviation Safety Oversight System (GASOS) Programme, and the RSOO Cooperative Platform.

25. Since the 2017 *Global Forum on RSOOs*, ICAO has been working to improve its coordination with regional bodies, and we are continuing to develop and evolve our programmes in close coordination with our Regional Offices.
26. In the weeks ahead, ICAO will consolidate the outcomes of the HLCC, the AFI RSOO Workshop, and this Conference, and then identify the way forward to the upcoming ICAO Assembly.
27. Until then I will be looking forward to the results of this important Conference, and I wish you all a very engaging and productive event.
28. Thank you.