



**Opening remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the ICAO CAPSCA Symposium**

(Virtual Event, 29 March 2022)

Good morning/ afternoon everyone

1. It's my honour to welcome you to this second ICAO CAPSCA Global Symposium, CAPSCA being the ICAO Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation.
2. I wish to begin by expressing ICAO's gratitude to the World Health Organization (WHO) for its invaluable contributions and support to many of ICAO's health-related initiatives, including the ICAO Council's COVID-19 Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) recommendations, and continued collaboration on the CAPSCA programme.
3. A special word of thanks as well to the WHO's Dr. Jaouad Mahjour (Assistant Director-General, Emergency Preparedness), who will be presenting the keynote speech today, and to all of our moderators for taking time out of their busy schedules to help guide and inform today's discussions.
4. The theme of this symposium speaks to how important it is for us to build from the experience and insights we've gained from the COVID-19 pandemic in the aviation sector over the last two years.
5. We need to understand the needs and priorities of our Member States and other stakeholders, and develop a clear set of targets to help us enhance our capacities and improve future public health crisis response in aviation.
6. Managing the very complex interconnections between public health priorities, aviation safety considerations, and aviation connectivity priorities, is crucial to ensuring global health security, resilient supply chains, reliable service delivery, and safe and healthy passenger travel.

7. However, none of these objectives would be possible without your commitments and participation under the ICAO CAPSCA programme. As we have seen so clearly during the numerous public health events in the past, CAPSCA has played such an important role in mitigating, the impacts since being established in 2006.
8. Since that time, the CAPSCA membership has grown gradually and steadily, and currently about 160, or 83% of all ICAO Member States are CAPSCA Members.
9. Some of CAPSCA's key objectives are to assist States in addressing public health-related ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as the WHO International Health Regulations within the aviation sector.
10. An important aspect of this mandate requires CAPSCA to enhance State preparedness planning, and related capabilities for rapid response.
11. In this context I'm very pleased to update you that the ICAO Council has just adopted *Amendment 29* to *Annex 9* of the *Chicago Convention*, concerning *Facilitation*, so that it will now include a specific new chapter focused on health response provisions.
12. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CAPSCA experts have made very important contributions to the three phases of guidance issued by the ICAO CART.
13. Among these was the development of the new ICAO manual on *COVID-19 Cross-border Risk Management*, defining of the ICAO Public Health Corridor (PHC) concept, and development and launch of its comprehensive implementation package.
14. CAPSCA experts have also played an essential role in defining the datasets needed to develop ICAO health proof specifications for international air travel, namely the QR code-based Visible Digital Seals, which can be efficiently and cost-effectively verified and authenticated thanks to the newly established and freely-available ICAO Health Master List.
15. In October last year, ICAO convened a High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC), focused on aviation's pandemic recovery, resilience, and sustainability.

16. **A first key priority** for this symposium will be to review and strengthen the CAPSCA strategy in terms of its governance, structure, resources, and activities, on the basis of both the recommendations which emerged from the High-level Conference, and those which resulted from the regional CAPSCA conferences held the past two years.
17. **A second key priority** is this symposium's official outcome Statement, which will be considered as part of related deliberations to support the development of a comprehensive framework to guide the global response to significant public health emergencies in the aviation sector.
18. **A third priority** I would like to raise with you refers less to this event, and more to what we need from States to help the CAPSCA programme be as effective as possible at mitigating the impact of future public health events in aviation.
19. This includes countries' membership in the CAPSCA programme, and their identification of national CAPSCA focal points, in acknowledgment of the fact that no country can fully benefit from this framework unless they commit to and participate actively under it.
20. As now required under ICAO *Annex 9*, States must also do their part to establish National Air Transport Facilitation Committees (NATFCs).
21. This priority was underscored by the High-level Conference as well, and represents an essential step in assuring effective coordination of facilitation-related activities amongst all relevant agencies and officials.
22. Going forward, it's critical that we determine sustainable funding mechanisms for CAPSCA to enable ICAO to further assist States to achieve greater global implementation of its recommendations and guidelines.
23. **A fourth and final** priority include the ongoing further development of the ICAO CAPSCA manual and implementation package, work which will be guided by an Aviation Health Plan under the supervision of the ICAO Medical Provisions Study Group (MPSG).
24. In concluding, I'd like to take a moment to express ICAO's deep appreciation for the many CAPSCA experts who contributed so much to the COVID-19 response in aviation.

25. The CAPSCA framework continues to benefit from your diverse talents and insights in light of its multi-sector, multi-stakeholder approach, and by its leveraging of international and regional coordination mechanisms such as ICAO Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs).
26. The links which CAPSCA helps forge between these global and regional mechanisms, and related national initiatives such as Air Transport Facilitation Programmes and Air Transport Facilitation Committees, is also essential to the future success in assuring effective pandemic responses.
27. Your discussions this week will help to make this system of coordination and action even stronger and more efficient, and as you work toward those outcomes. I wish you all a very engaging and productive symposium.
28. Thank you.