



**Virtual welcome Remarks
by ICAO Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the International Forum for Aviation Research (IFAR)**

(Live and Virtual Event, 0830, Centre Sheraton, 5 April 2022)

1. A very good morning to all.
2. Although I regrettably can't be with you in person today, it's my great privilege to engage with you on a topic that has been at the core of ICAO's mandate for many years.
3. Monitoring and understanding the impact of technological and process innovations is an essential pre-requisite if our Organization is to effectively support States in establishing related international guidance.
4. A main aspect of ICAO's role in this context is to enable countries and industry to work together efficiently to explore, define, and adopt innovative technologies and procedures.
5. And when doing so, we must be diligent in assuring full compatibility and due integration with sectoral safety, security and sustainability priorities.
6. We also seek to ensure that 'no country is left behind' in this regard, and that all States and regions can access and optimize the socio-economic benefits which result from latest advances.
7. An important part of this work involves managing the transition from an array of promising application innovations to a well-structured system of technology pathways and integrated performance roadmaps.
8. This is something we've been undertaking for more than a decade now through ICAO, especially in the domains of aeronautics and air navigation.

9. However, these types of structured approaches also carry risks, in that they can become somewhat ‘self-fulfilling’ and restrictive over time.
10. This poses risks to how open and agile aviation remains when confronted with truly cutting edge and paradigm-changing innovation, and is something we should keep in mind going forward.
11. A related and important factor here refers to how open and democratized the field of aviation innovation has become for non-traditional participants.
12. Legacy models featuring massively-resourced and centralized aircraft and aeronautical development is now giving way to a much more diverse and distributed ecosystem of innovators and producers.
13. Countries are very much appreciating the economic potential in this emergence, with greatly reduced entry barriers for entrepreneurs and start-ups.
14. And at the same time, UN and aviation leaders have recognized the exponential growth in the number of innovators able to help us explore and address the very critical emissions reduction and sustainability challenges now before us.
15. This evolution represents a tremendous opportunity for society as a whole, but it has also proved challenging for ICAO to fully grasp and contextualize the many frontier aviation technologies and capabilities now emerging.
16. This is one of the reasons why we’ve intensified our outreach to innovators, and are seeking partnerships that can help maximize the related added value for our Member States.
17. Other rationales for this new approach include the challenges which accompany innovation, such as data protection or the ethics of automated decision-making.
18. In this context, as a UN entity, the role of ICAO is to reflect on-going work that aims to frame and protect the notion of general interest.
19. This is why it’s essential to build meaningful and long-term partnerships with organizations that can help us understand all aspects of innovation, and why the new Memorandum of Understanding with your International Forum for Aviation Research is such a key priority for us.

20. We greatly appreciate IFAR's ability to independently assess upcoming innovations, and guide us through the aviation research agenda, and I wish to acknowledge and thank many of you here today for your earlier and related contributions as advisors to your ICAO delegations.
21. This new ICAO/IFAR agreement will be transformative in permitting the research community to participate in a more dynamic and effective manner with ICAO, as a single international organization, and I look forward with great enthusiasm to our productive collaboration.
22. Thank you.