



**Closing remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the 2022 ICAO Innovation Fair**

(25 September, ICAO HQ Montréal)

1. Innovation has been instrumental in furthering ICAO's mandate for more than 75 years. The monitoring and understanding of the impact of technological and process evolutions are an essential pre-requisite for the establishment of international standards.
2. As our sector adopts and integrates the latest technologies and solutions, it also enhances the capability of our global network to perform more safely, securely, efficiently, and sustainably, and to drive enhanced socio-economic benefits for societies and businesses in every world region.
3. These benefits in turn augment the ability of States to invest in and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals now being globally pursued under the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
4. We're living today in the midst of an incredible era of innovation in every branch of research and development.
5. It's important to recall in this context that our sector can benefit as much from new discoveries in cleaner energy propulsion, battery science, or digital revolutions, such as blockchain and machine learning, as it can from direct aviation innovations in terms of new airframes and aeronautics, or passenger processing technologies.
6. This 21st century discovery ecosystem is proving to be especially fertile and diverse, and this presents some incredible opportunities for non-traditional aircraft or engine manufacturing States.

7. But to fully exploit the potential of emerging industries and new entrants, governments and industry need to work closely together to create dependable and equally fertile investment environments, closely integrated with effective national incubator programmes.
8. This process of innovation democratization is a real paradigm shift in aviation, and indeed in all industries and sectors, and it highlights why global analysis and certification processes need to be both diligent and dynamic.
9. This year's Innovation Fair has highlighted an array of challenges in bringing aviation innovations from concept to reality, both for innovators and for regulators.
10. Many of these factors are common across jurisdictions, and the panel discussions brought this to the fore.
11. This highlights the need for regulators to operate in new and creative ways to productively engage with innovators, and new ways to communicate with a broader range of stakeholders.
12. In the area of Urban Air Mobility, for example, we heard numerous insights on how a more inclusive governance system could help pave the way to societal acceptance and deployment.
13. We also heard about the significant transformations now underway, with many Civil Aviation Authorities already reorganizing the way they work and how they interact with innovators.
14. Some governments are establishing public-private Committees to facilitate mutual understanding, which includes enhanced familiarization of the regulatory parameters within which start-up companies will have to operate.
15. And many incubator and accelerator initiatives are also increasingly identifying awareness-raising on regulation as an essential aspect of how they can contribute to a vibrant innovation ecosystem.
16. In my role as Secretary General, I am also working to transform ICAO to make it more responsive and agile, and able to process and enable innovations to benefit our sector and the countries it serves as rapidly and prudently as possible.

17. There are no shortcuts when assuring the safety, security, and sustainability of international aviation, but that doesn't mean we cannot be continuously more efficient at how we responsibly assess and standardize new technologies and procedures.
18. It is also important to recognize that these innovations are only as effective as the regulators who apply them, and ICAO will accordingly become more proactive in supporting States in this area.
19. Our outreach to innovators needs to be intensified, and we will also seek new ways to maximize added value for States on the basis of the clearly defined goals in our Strategy on Innovation.
20. We'll also be paying very close attention to assuring that the latest solutions are made accessible to ALL States, equally and rapidly, both for purposes of global harmonization, and to assure no country is left behind, as our network becomes greener, more agile, and more resilient in the years ahead.
21. I think that this Innovation Fair has also helped us to appreciate ICAO's role as the nexus of public and private cooperation in air transport. This makes it a natural platform for global conversation, partnership, and action on innovation.
22. Our status as a UN system agency additionally compels us to define a vision of aviation innovation, fully inclusive of related societal priorities, whether in terms of gender equality, socio-economic development opportunities, or sustainable prosperity and resilience.
23. In recent years, our UN role has also seen us coordinating very closely with UN bodies concerned with combatting terrorist and criminal mobility, and contributing to their work as an important partner, given the foundational role of air transport in the international movement of people and goods.
24. These priorities affect planning and decision making regarding the collection and transmission of passenger data, national identification management systems inclusive of printed or digital passports, visas and health proofs, and the secure backbones needed to house and protect related data.
25. Some of these points were explored on the second day of the Innovation Fair, when we discussed latest developments in aviation security and facilitation.

26. Mr. Pekoske, Administrator of the United States Transport Security Administration, opened these engagements by highlighting the potential of a more open architecture in aviation screening, potentially helping States achieve a more secure, resilient and interoperable ‘system of systems’ in aviation security.
27. These open architecture approaches also have their own sets of challenges, however, both from the development and implementation standpoints.
28. Further engagements in aviation security focused on recent developments in machine learning capabilities, and the interconnections in this domain between human and artificial intelligence.
29. There was broad agreement here that the future of aviation security will need to achieve an effective and complementary balance between the two.
30. Lastly, our discussions on the implementation challenges of seamless and contactless travel, focused on the need for interoperable secure digital credentials for health and identity, intelligent data sharing, consent-based use of biometric data, and a reorientation of operational processes.
31. Developers and policy makers from government and industry will need to work better together toward these priorities, in order to ultimately realize more efficient traveler processing at airports.
32. In closing now, I wish to call on all innovators and regulators to stay cognizant of the need to enhance the contributions and visibility of women in the innovation area.
33. An inclusive and diversity approach recognizes that the populations we serve are diverse, and will help to identify and mitigate the risk of misguided bias detrimentally affecting the Artificial Intelligence and data analytics applications which many future solutions will depend on.
34. In 2024, the United Nations Summit of the Future will be held in New York, and the entire UN system, States and civil society will be invited at that time to formulate and agree on a new “Pact for the Future”.

35. The goal of this new pact will be to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to ensure that the world is more aligned as it considers and takes the next steps to protect succeeding generations from current existential threats.
36. ICAO will assure that international aviation has a strong voice in these discussions, and that the expanding roles for civil society which innovation is now enabling will be appreciated by all concerned.
37. It has been a sincere pleasure for us to host so many brilliant speakers and engaged participants on the eve of our 41st Assembly, and I'm sure that the vibrant discussions we've heard here over the past three days will leave a lasting impression on its outcomes. I also express my appreciation for the many exhibitors of new innovations, which contributed to the success of this Innovation Fair, and the future focused discussions among the panellists and participants. We are also grateful for the sponsors of the social events and refreshments which allowed us to remain on premises and take advantage of the rich networking opportunities.
38. Thank you.