



**Address by the  
Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization  
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar  
to the Amsterdam Drone Week**

*(Pre-recorded for delivery on 21 March 2023)*

*Good morning ladies and gentlemen,*

1. It is my great pleasure to provide opening remarks for this year's Amsterdam Drone Week. Unfortunately, I cannot join you in person today as this event is taking place concurrently with ICAO's 228<sup>th</sup> Council Session. However, I'm pleased that several of my colleagues are joining you in-person.
2. The advanced air mobility (AAM) industry is growing and innovating at a phenomenal pace today. As a result, regulators and traditional industry players are being challenged to become more adaptive and efficient at assessing and accommodating new entrants.
3. This pace of innovation is also impacting the international standardization of this exciting new component of civil aviation, and ICAO fully understands that it has an important role to play in progressing the practical application of next generation aircraft and air services for civil societies.
4. ICAO's Regional Director for the European Region, Mr. Nicolas Rallo, will be highlighting several of our key priorities for AAM in just a moment, and in advance of that I wish to highlight a few points concerning what AAM will mean to aviation, as well as the benefits and challenges this poses to existing systems and frameworks.
5. In the first place, I think we all need to recognize that the realization of advanced air mobility will lead to the emergence of future air services for passengers and goods in cities and regions which some of us have not even imagined yet.

6. Initial operations are expected to begin domestically, while cross-border operations are expected to commence soon after in many States around the world.
7. Second, this promising future is likely to require common regulatory approaches and, consequently, regional, then global harmonization and interoperability.
8. Global harmonization in AAM drives clear benefits for both national authorities, who are eager to share experiences in developing flexible and effective regulatory frameworks, as well as for industry innovators and entrepreneurs, whose research and commercialization efforts are tremendously aided by an aligned, stable, and a level global playing field of AAM performance requirements.
9. This new ecosystem will be the dawn of an entirely new era in aviation, and one which will be machine-centred, highly digitalized, autonomous in many, if not most instances, and much more structurally decentralized from an operations and management standpoint, than the hub and spoke model which defines air transport today, which is a third aspect I want to highlight.
10. An important implication of this decentralization concerns how much more inclusive and adaptive we will have to become in terms of future operations, and their infrastructure and management.
11. In many cases, this evolution will engage, what we think of today, as ‘non-aviation actors’, in the management of the very-low airspace, that is considered by local authorities as an extension of the public space.
12. City governments, community organizations, urban planners and even electric service providers and emergency responders will be important participants in these discussions and solutions.
13. Still another important factor in this equation relates to integration, which will be needed between advanced air mobility operations and existing ground mobility systems.
14. This poses emerging safety risks, due to the need for multi-level governance for the planning, development, and ultimately management of very-low level airspace, including in the design and operation of new AAM vertiport facilities, in a current collaboration environment, where many lines of authority and other parameters still need to be drawn.

15. The societal acceptance of any innovation is a fundamental prerequisite for the adoption and successful commercialization of any new technology or capability, as we are already appreciating in current discussions on autonomous operations, and so we need to be very mindful that the challenges before us are not only technical in nature.
16. We are here together today because we recognize above all that the challenges to be addressed will require our collective efforts.
17. I wish to give you my personal reassurance today that ICAO is committed to playing its role in supporting and harmonizing this collective progress, and I wish everyone very productive discussions.
18. Thank you.