



**Address by the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the Future of Aviation Safety
and Aircraft Accident Investigation Symposium**

(Recorded in advance for event in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 3 May 2023)

1. It is my great pleasure to open this Future of Aviation Safety and Aircraft Accident Investigation Symposium.
2. On behalf of ICAO and everyone present with you today, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), in conjunction with ICAO's Middle East Regional Office, for the organization and hosting of this important and timely event.
3. I would also like to express my personal regrets for not being able to be there with you in person today, in light of previous commitments.
4. Safety is a top priority for ICAO, and remarkable progress has been achieved in addressing and improving air safety performance over decades of development in international air transport.
5. Despite these advances, however, aircraft accidents still regrettably persist as a continuing reminder of the need to do more.
6. Accident Investigation Authorities around the world have played a critical role in achieving our current and admirable safety levels, notably through their continuous contributions to the analysis and understanding of accident events to aid their future prevention.

7. The importance and success of these efforts cannot be overstated, but with air transport now experiencing an unprecedented new phase of technological and process innovation, much of what we have previously understood about aircraft and their investigations, is now significantly transforming, in order to remain effective and relevant.
8. This explains why the timing of this event is so important, and one of its key aims will be to foster a lively exchange of information among you, on how new technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud based coordination, and other innovations, can be leveraged for positive impact on future aviation operations and airworthiness, as well as the methods employed by aircraft accident investigators.
9. We cannot discuss this future of aviation safety and aircraft accident investigation without this focus on innovation, something which has been instrumental in furthering ICAO's mandate for more than 75 years .
10. Future accident investigations will undoubtedly be redefined by new technologies, and how aviation evolves towards entirely new aircraft types with increasing autonomy, meaning we all have much to explore and much to learn.
11. Remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), and particularly those that must be integrated into the conventional air traffic management system, are already becoming the subject of aircraft accident and incident investigations, and will be an important subject for discussion at this symposium.
12. And when we consider both current and future RPAS capabilities, whether in terms of cargo deliveries, humanitarian operations, border and resource monitoring, or other still-to-be-imagined types of new air services, it is critical to reflect on currently-established ICAO SARPs and guidance, and ensure they are updated accordingly.
13. Annex 13 to the Chicago Convention, which focuses exclusively on accident investigation, reflects the consensus of world governments, that investigations of aircraft accidents and serious incidents should be conducted with due independence and objectivity, and exclusively with the aim of preventing future accidents, while avoiding any apportioning of blame or liability.

14. These are fundamental principles directly aligned with the tenets and objectives of all effective Safety Management Systems, and assuring that they inform all of your discussions and proposals, should be the **first priority** for you over the next two days.
15. **A second priority for ICAO in this area**, is to promote the benefits and cost-effectiveness of increased collaboration in this field, notably through the Regional Accident Investigation Organizations (RAIO) mechanism.
16. This is an excellent option for many States given the significant resource and financial burdens associated with the comprehensive and effective investigation of any major aircraft accident, and I would like to highlight and applaud in this context, the Middle East North Africa Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Regional Cooperation Mechanism (MENA ARCM), which commenced operations in May of last year.
17. These RAIO platforms for multi-lateral technical cooperation among States, deliver clear win-win safety benefits at both the national and regional levels, once again relying on the time-tested benefits of increased international and regional collaboration to solve international aviation's most pressing challenges.
18. A last priority I would raise with you today concerns the recent progress made through the ICAO Council, emphasizing the need to increase international awareness and action, to provide proper assistance and care to air crash victims and their families.
19. ICAO has now adopted Amendment 29 to Annex 9 on *Facilitation*, which elevates Recommended Practice 8.46 to Standard 8.47, and introduces an obligation for States to establish legislation, regulations, and policies in this area.
20. We're also strengthening current provisions on providing information to victims and their families; and have developed a Training Course to help States set out appropriate family assistance legislation and plans
21. As of 2022, ICAO formally designated 20 February as the *International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families*.

22. In concluding, I wish to once again regret that I can't be there to join you over the next two days, especially since it will provide such a dynamic environment for exploring these challenges, and also networking among some very distinguished and accomplished experts in this field.
23. I am certain that the ideas shared and generated during this symposium, will have a key role to play in shaping the future of aviation safety and aircraft accident investigation, and I look forward with great anticipation to the outcomes of your work.
24. Thank you.