



**Address by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the North Bund Forum, China**

(Virtual message – 22 September 2023)

(1175 words – 9 minutes)

1. It is a great honor to provide this address to the North Bund Forum in line with this year’s theme of “Openness, Cooperation and Innovation: Co-building a New Landscape of Global Shipping and Aviation”.
2. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Transport of China and the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government for this opportunity.
3. Today’s global economic climate is yielding uncertainty but also opportunity.
4. This situation is exacerbated by protectionist trade policies—often in the forms of taxes and tariffs—as well as by international conflicts that are distorting the marketplace.
5. It is in this context that ICAO is refocusing on efforts to help assure that global aviation is *building back better*, in tune with the “New Landscape” of our theme today.
6. We are in parallel turning to study the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 public health emergency to enhance the resilience of the global flight network.
7. Openness on both counts will be key.
8. Let me cite a pandemic recommendation from the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce, which encouraged States to grant extra-bilateral traffic rights—specifically 7th freedom—for all-cargo flight operations.

9. While this grant of traffic rights was of special benefit during the COVID-19 pandemic, we now recognize the permanent benefits to air cargo of these policies, and a related ICAO Assembly Resolution has been adopted.
10. I would like to highlight that more broadly, various regional examples such as the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) shows us what can be accomplished regionally by opening up, and we should consider how projects like the Single African Air Transport Market can contribute to newer trade blocs like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
11. Noting the strong presence of maritime stakeholders on the agenda, I would like to acknowledge the various aircraft acquisitions and business arrangements made by leading maritime carriers and infrastructure providers over the past two years.
12. The ICAO Assembly has also requested our Council to address the remaining issues of concern around a *Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines*. A convention on the liberalization of air carriers and control has the potential to allow for greater diversity business models, and accordingly, a diversification in the opportunities for growth.
13. I would also like to highlight that the emerging business models that include maritime bring a new perspective on multimodal transport networks, and on how they can generate additional efficiencies through innovation, our second theme today, and the sharing of best practices.
14. An example of this is digital information exchange, in which our sister UN agency, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), is playing a leading role in.
15. In addition to maritime, we now also have e-commerce retailers themselves integrating aircraft into their enterprises through creative business arrangements.
16. Reflecting the significant rise of these entrepreneurs, ICAO is now preparing to provide States and other stakeholders with air cargo guidance for e-commerce. This will help them access the sustainable development benefits of a flourishing e-commerce sector.
17. I have spoken a lot about cargo, but supporting openness to passenger travel, and accommodating the security and facilitation requirements, will also call for significant innovation.

18. Here, ICAO has, for example, introduced specifications for new travel document formats that can be issued and verified quickly, at low cost and in a non-contact manner internationally, such as the Digital Travel Credential and the Visible Digital Seal. We are also building and maintaining the infrastructure needed to support these tools, such as the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD).
19. The global interoperability of systems and formats will be critical, and we also continue to work to ensure this.
20. Unmanned aircraft systems—also known as UAS or drones—and advanced air mobility also present opportunities that demand both innovation and openness.
21. While full certification by regulators remains in the future, ICAO is contributing actively to Member States' efforts to make the vision a reality, including by developing safety and economic regulation guidance.
22. Of course, we cannot discuss these issues while ignoring the climate crisis. Openness must also mean opening our eyes to the urgent need to decarbonize, and to the variety of ways we can do this, especially through innovation.
23. While there are many important avenues to pursue, today I wish to focus on sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuel (LCAF) and cleaner energies at global level.
24. These fuels have the potential to decrease aviation's carbon footprint by 55% by 2050, making them by far the largest key to achieving the ICAO Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal of net-zero emissions by that year.
25. This November, ICAO Member States will meet in Dubai at the third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels, also known as CAAF/3.
26. Policies, Financing and Implementation Support for these fuels will be on the agenda of CAAF/3, and the emergence of a global framework is envisioned.
27. ICAO has also launched the Assistance, Capacity-building and Training programme, known as ACT-SAF. It supports the development and deployment of SAF across all regions. To date, ACT-SAF counts 85 Partner States and 45 organisations.

28. It is further supported by the ICAO Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). 125 ICAO Member States have expressed their intention to voluntarily participate in the scheme from 1 January 2024.
29. I would like to take this opportunity to invite States who have not done so yet, to join the ACT-SAF programme with a view of strengthening their own SAF markets, and to join the current CORSIA States, as this would provide incentives to invest in emissions reduction projects.
30. Please now let me also briefly cover cooperation, which is a priority that is very dear to ICAO's heart.
31. Cooperation is at the centre of the Chicago Convention, and cooperation is what had enabled us to help assure the safe, secure, and orderly development of civil aviation for almost 80 years, and now to agree on a net zero objective.
32. Cooperation is what got us through the COVID-19 public health emergency.
33. Cooperation is nothing short of essential to achieving all the objectives I have briefly outlined today.
34. The discussions you will have at this Forum will be critical for both civil aviation and shipping industries globally, but I also hope that they provide an opportunity to find new ways to cooperate around our goals after this important Forum has concluded.
35. I look forward to the important outcomes of your work here, and wish you all a very productive and constructive meeting.
36. Thank you.