



ICAO

**Opening remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
TIACA Executive Summit**

(Recorded speech for 7 November 2023)

1. Good morning,
2. As Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, it is my honour to have this opportunity to illustrate our commitment to the safe, secure, and sustainable development of international air cargo services, by outlining some of our key priorities underpinning the realization of our vision.
3. I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of this event, and Mr. Glyn Hughes, Director General of TIACA in particular, for this platform. I sincerely regret that I was not able to be with you in person today.
4. ICAO itself is the global platform where 193 Member States come together to develop and adopt global strategic plans, standards, practices, policies, and other guidance materials that align and therefore optimize and accelerate their enhancement of the safety, security, sustainability, resilience, of their aviation sectors, and reach of their air services.
5. Given aviation's unique and crucial role as a catalyst for sustainable development, this work is also contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, encompassing priorities such as the elimination of poverty, the correction of the global developmental imbalance, the economic inclusion of women, and the vitally important need for robust climate action.

6. Air cargo is undeniably a key component here. For Least Developing Countries (LDCs), Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), it is nothing less than a lifeline that enables them to overcome infrequent boat services and poor infrastructure for ground transportation.
7. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated the importance of air cargo services. The Ministerial Declaration resulting from the ICAO High-level Conference on COVID-19, highlighted the importance of air cargo services and global supply chains to the recovery of the aviation industry, as well as the global economy, not to mention the immediate relief support in terms of humanitarian and other essential deliveries in times of crises.
8. As we have emerged from this unprecedented global crisis, one of ICAO's priorities to assure the future resilience of air cargo services is to assist our Member States with the modernization of the regulatory environment.
9. We are targeting the removal of existing regulatory impediments, and the creation of operational flexibility for air cargo operators, with a view to facilitate the provision of efficient and cost-effective services.
10. It's about the establishment of regulatory environments that promote connectivity, competition, transparency and choice for consumers, not least because improved connectivity and lower transport costs have proven to boost trade flows, by globalizing supply chains and associated investments.
11. The importance of adequate economic regulatory frameworks has been recognized in several instances and fora at ICAO, not least by TIACA itself.
12. I would like to express our appreciation for TIACA's support of a Working paper presented at the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly that called for the development of a specific international agreement to facilitate further liberalization of air cargo services.
13. This would encompass seventh freedom traffic rights, digitalization, and the development of the aviation workforce.

14. ICAO also appreciates TIACA's continuous engagement and contributions, to our Air Transport Regulation Panel, and more specifically to its Working Group 2, which precisely addresses the topic of air cargo liberalization. The inputs of your association have significantly contributed to the progress of developing a specific international agreement to further liberalize air cargo services.
15. I would like to take the opportunity to mention that the next meeting of the panel will be held from 16 to 18 April 2024, and that we hope to count on your usual support.
16. Ensuring that this good work translates to the expansion of air services, especially to currently under-served areas, does of course also require a globally-coordinated strategy for environmental protection, and carbon emissions in particular, that takes into account the actual realities of each country and its economic actors.
17. I would like to take some time now to assure you that a very strong global CO2 emissions reduction framework for international civil aviation has emerged from ICAO, as have mechanisms to implement it. Work is also continuing at an intense pace to enhance climate action in our sector.
18. In support of the Paris Agreement's temperature goal, ICAO Member States agreed on a collective global Long-term Aspirational Goal for international aviation of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050, or LTAG, during the 41st session of the ICAO Assembly in October 2022.
19. Its implementation requires the accelerated adoption of innovative aircraft technologies and more efficient flight operations, and the increased production and use of cleaner energies for aviation.
20. Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF), and other aviation cleaner energies are expected to contribute over half of the needed CO2 emission reductions.
21. However, their tremendous potential is counter-balanced by the enormous challenge to finance a scale up of the production and distribution of these fuels.
22. In this regard, ICAO is fostering international partnerships and cooperation, by actively engaging with Member States, industry stakeholders, fuel producers, and financial institutions in order to accelerate the necessary investments to unleash the full potential of these cleaner energy sources.

23. We are now also exploring the possibility of establishing an 'ICAO Finvest Hub' to facilitate enhanced access to public and private investment capacities and funding from financial institutions. It will have a focus on developing countries and States with particular needs.
24. Our Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (ACT-SAF) programme is also providing tailored implementation support for States, including through the conduct of SAF feasibility studies, policy development, and project implementation.
25. To date, more than 130 States and International Organizations have joined the ACT-SAF programme, and are actively contributing to, as well as receiving support, under this programme, in line with ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative.
26. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage more stakeholders and organizations to join and be part of this growing movement.
27. We are also counting on a strong voice for air cargo within the ICAO Global Coalition for Sustainable Aviation.
28. This ICAO Coalition is a forum of stakeholders that aims to facilitate the development of new ideas and accelerate the implementation of innovative solutions that will further reduce CO2 emissions at the source, both on the ground and in the air.
29. Finally, I also want to highlight the significance of the third ICAO High Level Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels, taking place in less than a month in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
30. The high-level conference is expected to agree on an ICAO global framework toward aviation's cleaner energy transition, helping to accelerate the development of the regulatory and policy frameworks needed to boost investors' confidence to scale up the global SAF production.
31. *Now*, ICAO's long-standing and valued relationship with TIACA has extended and will continue to expand to many other areas as well.
32. Let me point to e-commerce, for which your participation in the Working Group on Air Cargo Security (WGACS) and the Dangerous Goods Panel (DGP), are particularly important.

33. Supporting and encouraging the development of e-commerce is a key priority for ICAO, given air transport's pivotal role in this transformative, highly dynamic, and extremely promising sector.
34. This role is a natural result of air cargo's advantages over other modes of transport in terms of speed and reliability – allowing for “same-day” and “next-day” delivery services and transportation of urgent or time-sensitive goods.
35. One way to illustrate the success and now crucial importance of e-commerce's success is by looking at the vertiginous growth of its share in scheduled international mail tonne kilometres (MTKs), which grew from 16 per cent at the beginning of the last decade to 88 per cent just prior to the pandemic.
36. However, while this growth in e-commerce has introduced many economic opportunities for many small, medium and large businesses, this has also brought on challenges, including adherence to ICAO provisions for transport of lithium batteries, among others, which TIACA has supported us to effectively address.
37. You are also helping us with another key priority for air cargo operations: Digitalization.
38. With the pandemic catalyzing the focus on digitalization of legacy paper-based processes, to allow social distancing and remote work by actors all along the supply chain, the importance of further advancing digitalization initiatives is all underscored by the need to handle increasing volumes of cargo information, increased multimodal connectivity and increased drone use.
39. Supporting this, ICAO and the United Nations Center for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business have released specifications for the digital sharing and seamless information exchange of air cargo shipment information found in the Air Waybill, the Consignment Security Declaration, and the Dangerous Goods Declaration.
40. I would like to highlight that the European Union's Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation presents an opportunity to implement these deliverables, and we look forward to TIACA's active support in this emerging area.

41. I would also like to underscore that ICAO is cognizant that digitalization in aviation, and more particularly in air cargo, must accelerate further, but that this acceleration must be accompanied by proactive efforts to address cyber threat and risks.
42. Monitoring these emerging trends and identifying associated opportunities and challenges through collaboration with the industry is therefore key to ICAO's on-going ability to support the safe, secure, and sustainable development of these technologies, their operations, and the sector, as a whole.
43. We can also address these challenges by building upon the frameworks that we already have, integrating capacities and capabilities in innovative ways.
44. The existing regulatory and technological frameworks in the area of facilitation provide a good example. The Standards and Recommended Practices of Annex 9 – *Facilitation* – provide an excellent basis for the efficient movement of goods, and we can consider how the tools and infrastructure in place for moving travellers across borders using technology can be leveraged for digitized, more secure and more efficient movement of air cargo.
45. Similarly, we appreciate TIACA's contributions to the latest edition of *Moving Air Cargo Globally* – this is indeed a perfect example of the benefits of our on-going cooperation and collaboration.
46. I hope all these priorities and considerations will help nourish your discussions and reflections at this event, leading you to new insights on the way forward.
47. Now, before concluding today, I would like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation for TIACA's contribution to the development of various trainings in partnership with the ICAO's Capacity, Development and Implementation Bureau.
48. Most notably, the ICAO-TIACA Safe Supply Chain training course is a great resource for regulatory and commercial stakeholders in the air cargo and mail supply chain. The course covers all the necessary knowledge and skills for stakeholders to work together effectively to ensure that shipment is handled in a safe and efficient manner within the ICAO's regulatory framework.

49. This speaks to your recognition of the fact that our industry is only as good, as strong and as driven as the people that work within it.
50. More over, assuring that air cargo can recruit young talents, males and females, in today's highly competitive labour market, will be crucial. ICAO's "next generation of aviation professionals" programme and our gender equality programme initiatives aim to help you address this challenge.
51. Indeed, working together on these and the other opportunities and challenges I have presented today will help ensure the sustainable development of air cargo in the face of these turbulent, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, and relatively uncertain times.
52. I wish to thank you once again for this opportunity to advocate for our cooperation and wish you now a successful meeting.
53. Thank you.