



**Opening Remarks
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the ICAO Legal Seminar in the Republic of Korea**

(Seoul, Republic of Korea, 16 April 2024)

1. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the ICAO Legal Seminar.
2. Since 2006, the Republic of Korea has hosted seven editions of the ICAO Legal Seminar and over the years it has become a landmark event for the international air law community.
3. The Seminar began life as an event for the Asia and Pacific regions but has now evolved into a global meeting for all Member States. I am delighted to welcome here participants from 78 States, from various ICAO regions, attending in person, or following the livestreaming.
4. This year's Seminar is held amidst two remarkable anniversaries for ICAO and the global aviation community: we are marking both the 80th anniversary of the Chicago Convention and the 75 years that have passed since the adoption of Annex 9 – *Facilitation*.
5. For 80 years, the Chicago Convention serves as the most successful and important international legal instrument in aviation and proved how a whole industry can advance by spectacular leaps through well established Treaties. Each of its Annexes are crucially important to the safe, secure, and sustainable development of air transport and its crucially important ability to act as a catalyst for growth.
6. In the Convention, States “agreed on certain principles and arrangements in order that international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and **orderly** manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically”, and the international air law fostered by ICAO provides the foundation for this.
7. In this context, we have designated 2024 as the Year of Facilitation.

8. Accordingly, the importance of the rule of law, and the role of lawyers in this regard, is fundamental for the aviation community, and contributes enormously to the success of the sector.
9. Meetings for this community of professionals strengthen cooperation and the exchange of views. Discussions on important subjects of legal interest are highly beneficial, particularly as ICAO and its Member States progress work in anticipation of the 39th Session of the ICAO Legal Committee to be held in June 2024, and the 42nd session of the ICAO Assembly next year.
10. Indeed, the organization of this Seminar, and your participation here, serve the objectives of Assembly Resolution A41-4, in which the ICAO Assembly acknowledges the important role of the civil aviation legal advisers and legal practitioners, and encourages Member States to make use of seminars, workshops and courses and other similar events for the continuous training and development of their legal advisers and to consider hosting from time to time such events.
11. On the programme of the Legal Seminar this year, there is a wide range of topics in the legal field. Some of them are on the Work Programme of the Legal Committee of ICAO and will be discussed more formally, such as the review of the ICAO rules for the settlement of disputes or the ratification of key international air law treaties. Others are emerging new topics, such as new air mobility.
12. Let us take the Chicago Convention's anniversary this year as an important opportunity to advocate for the continuous development of our legal instruments and for their wide ratification.
13. I wish to underline that the 2016 Protocols amending Articles 50 (a) and 56 of the Chicago Convention, with a view to enlarging the membership of the Council and increasing the size of the Air Navigation Committee, are not in force yet due to insufficient State ratifications.
14. The 41st Session of the Assembly recommended to all Contracting States to ratify these Protocols most urgently.
15. Among the priorities for action that I am sharing with you today, this is therefore the first I'd like you to consider.
16. I wish to stress that continuous efforts are made by the ICAO Legal Affairs and External Relations Bureau for the promotion of the ratification of international air law treaties, and I encourage you all to make further efforts in order to reach our common goals.

17. Indeed, the challenges we face reaching these goals are significant, but the opportunities for positive change are even greater when we work together.
18. In this regard, ICAO is well aware that our global influence is measured by how widely and effectively our standards, policies, strategies, plans, and other guidance materials are addressed and implemented by regulators.
19. We also know that a technically sound standard that cannot be effectively implemented by all States presents significant challenges to a harmonized and interoperable air transportation system.
20. These are some of the reasons why ICAO is working to enhance the delivery of implementation support services and products, and better plan and integrate the related requirements into every stage of a new or amended standard's development.
21. Achieving this will increase our agility and allow us to be much more responsive in integrating new entrants and the cutting edge innovations.
22. Delivering international standards more effectively and efficiently will allow our Member States to benefit more quickly from innovations in operations and technologies that promise to transform our sector.
23. Our vision is that by 2027, ICAO will have transformed into a modern, digital, adaptive and collaborative organization demonstrating operational excellence.
24. ICAO will be a results driven organization focused on its people with a transparent, accountable, efficient, and values driven culture that applies an innovative and agile approach, in collaboration with key partners and other stakeholders, to deliver an enhanced service for Member States.
25. I would like to highlight that ICAO's upcoming new long-term strategic plan will draw on the current needs and future expectations of the various stakeholders, and on analysis of the opportunities and challenges lying ahead for the aviation system.
26. The significance of our commitment to serving you better is the second point I would like you to keep in mind at this seminar and beyond.
27. Now, I must highlight the climate emergency.

28. ICAO is stressing the fact that aviation's ability to respond to this tremendous challenge depends on the cooperation and commitment of all actors from across the air transport sector, lawyers included.
29. A fundamental aspect of ICAO's work on climate depends on upholding our Rules based system under the Convention, which helps ensure the crucially important environmental standards in Annex 16 are promptly and fully implemented.
30. Over the last few years, ICAO environmental standards have significantly developed in line with emerging priorities. Indeed, all four volumes of Annex 16 were most recently amended in July 2023.
31. Helping assure effective and complete implementation of these standards is a primary priority for ICAO and our Legal Bureau.
32. Accordingly, as a third and final key priority for today, I would like to encourage you all to reflect on how you can support ICAO's climate advocacy within your respective organizations and countries, particularly in respect to implementation.
33. In concluding, I wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea once again, for its longstanding commitment, and for the consistent, comprehensive support for ICAO's work.
34. I encourage participants to take full advantage of the Seminar and wish you a successful event.
35. Thank you.