



CLOSING ADDRESS BY ICAO SECRETARY GENERAL

ICAO Facilitation Global Forum
Bogota, Colombia
23 October 2024

1. In my opening remarks, I spoke of the ICAO Facilitation Global Forum as a cornerstone of our 80th anniversary year. I also highlighted this event's role in advancing ICAO's fundamental objective of facilitating seamless and efficient air travel. Over these past three days, you have truly brought this vision to life through your informative presentations and engaging discussions. I am truly grateful for your work.
2. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to Colombia for hosting this productive event and to all of you who have journeyed from near and far to participate. A special thanks is due to our distinguished speakers and moderators, who have provided invaluable insights on various facilitation matters, and to you, the participants, for your thought-provoking contributions.
3. In the last few days we have witnessed an extraordinary gathering of minds, with approximately 200 participants in our opening session. The strong engagement, particularly around critical facilitation matters, was very encouraging. Your dedication underscores the importance of our collective mission.
4. Over the course of seven enlightening sessions, our expert panellists have shared their knowledge and insights with the aim of enhancing awareness and implementation of Annex 9 – Facilitation provisions. Their contributions have been instrumental. Allow me to highlight some key insights from these sessions:
5. We began by reaffirming our commitment to ICAO's fundamental mission, facilitating seamless and efficient air travel. This commitment has been the thread connecting every aspect of our discussions, from regulatory frameworks to passenger experiences, from cargo operations to public health measures.

6. Our dialogue has painted a vivid picture of the future of aviation facilitation. We have envisioned a world where passengers move seamlessly through airports, their journeys streamlined by advanced digital technologies and trustworthy data systems. We have explored how these same innovations can revolutionize air cargo processes, reducing delays and costs while enhancing security through risk-based screening methods.
7. Our discussions went beyond efficiency. We grappled with the critical need for effective coordination between nations and the myriad agencies within each country that play a role in aviation. We recognized that true progress in facilitation can only come through harmonized efforts of civil aviation authorities, airports, airlines, and government agencies such as customs, immigration, and health services.
8. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us of the urgent need for improved collaboration between health and aviation authorities. We have learned valuable lessons about responding to public health emergencies, and we are committed to standardizing these measures to ensure we're better prepared for future challenges.
9. In our most poignant moments, we addressed our duty to aircraft accident victims and their families. These discussions served as a powerful reminder of the human element at the heart of all we do, underscoring the importance of compassion and preparedness in our industry.
10. Looking to the future and in the context of the ICAO long-term Strategic Plan 2026-2050, we tackled the challenge of accommodating growing air traffic while improving the travel experience. We explored strategies for expanding airport capacity and enhancing facilities, always with an eye towards balancing growth with sustainability and passenger satisfaction.
11. Throughout these sessions, a common theme emerged, the power of collaboration and innovation in shaping the future of aviation. Your insights and expertise have not only highlighted the significance of facilitation in air transport operations but will also guide ICAO's future work in this vital area.
12. I am confident that these discussions have highlighted the significance of facilitation in the efficient conduct of air transport operations and will contribute to enhancing global awareness and implementation of Annex 9. They will also provide valuable inputs to ICAO's work in Facilitation moving forward.

13. As we approach the end of 2024, and as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of ICAO, I am pleased by the overwhelming support from Member States and relevant international organizations in recognizing 2024 as the Year of Facilitation and the 75th Anniversary of Annex 9. This milestone offers an excellent opportunity to enhance global awareness of facilitation, foster the implementation of Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices, and improve the air traveller experience. It engages ICAO, Member States, international organizations, and the wider aviation community in this important effort.
14. Building on the momentum of the ICAO 2024 Year of Facilitation, we will continue to collaborate closely on facilitation matters. We encourage States to engage in awareness-raising, capacity-building, and implementation support activities. Moreover, we invite you to produce and share promotional materials on facilitation that can be featured on ICAO's dedicated Year of Facilitation website. Together, we can amplify our message and extend our reach.
15. Let me remind you of the upcoming events I mentioned in my opening remarks. The ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) symposium will take place from 13-15 November this year. Additionally, ICAO's Second Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families will be held in Haarlem, Netherlands, from 26-28 November 2024. Finally, a joint ICAO/ACI/IATA Symposium on Accessibility in international civil aviation will be held in Montreal, Canada, from 2-3 December 2024.
16. On 7 December, we will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, signed in Chicago in 1944. For eight decades, this convention has guided our industry, standing as a testament to the power of international cooperation and shared vision in aviation.
17. In concluding, I urge you to honour the enduring legacy of the Chicago Convention by taking the insights you created and gained here back to your respective States and organizations, to continue to implement new ideas, advocate for progress, and continue to collaborate across borders and industries. This is how we can create a truly seamless sky and indeed contribute to a truly resilient and sustainable future for aviation worldwide.
18. Thank you and safe travels home.