



**Opening address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Assad Kotaite International Aviation and Safety Forum**

(Pre-recorded message, 10 October 2023)

As the President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, I would like to congratulate Lebanon for the convening of this landmark event celebrating an important figure in ICAO's history.

I regret that I cannot not be in Beirut with you today, but would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to present ICAO's perspectives and priorities for the vital topics you will be addressing here today.

Allow me to start by saying how gratifying it is to see an important aviation event like this one organized in Lebanon.

Lebanon has always been an active partner for ICAO thanks to decades of deep and continuous cooperation.

Recently, significant progress has emerged from this cooperation with ICAO Headquarters and the ICAO Regional Office in Cairo.

I would like to point to the setting up of a technical cooperation project, the development and publication of Lebanon's National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP), the hosting and conduct of an Aerodrome Certification Workshop, the finalization of the State Action Plan for the reduction of CO₂ emissions, which is a vital piece in the national and global climate action effort.

Thank you for this shared effort and your contribution to civil aviation.

This event is also named in honour of the longest serving President of the ICAO Council. As one of his successors, I would therefore also like to express ICAO's acknowledgement and gratitude to Lebanon for its role as the home of this outstanding figure in the history of the United Nations' specialized agency for civil aviation.

Indeed his work continues to shape ours today.

Assad Kotaite embodied the global efforts to develop civil aviation, as an essential tool of peace, exchange and economic development for all humanity.

Dr. Kotaite joined ICAO in its infancy and led the organization throughout its development as THE global forum for civil aviation. As the Representative of Lebanon to the Council, Secretary General of the Organization, and then for 30 years as President of the Council, he shaped an entire generation of ICAO Staff Members, promoted the organization, and played a key role in shaping the extraordinary development of air transport in the 20th century.

Assad Kotaite was awarded honors in line with his tremendous achievements and eminent contribution to international civil aviation. I would like to cite the Edward Warner Award, the Philip J. Klass award for lifetime achievement, and the title of President Emeritus of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Very few have been as deserving of these prestigious awards as much as he was.

I would therefore like to take the opportunity of the opening of this conference here in Beirut to also express our gratitude to the outstanding dedication of Assad Kotaite.

With his legacy in mind, allow me now to present ICAO's vision for air transport, and how together, we can shape the future of the skies.

ICAO has a unique role.

As a United Nations specialized Agency, we serve 193 Member States who have entrusted ICAO to support and enable their cooperation on a broad range of international issues. These cover almost every aspect of the safe, secure, and sustainable development of air transport.

One of ICAO's core missions, and one of the most significant outcomes of this cooperation, is the establishment of technical Standards. Internationally harmonized standards have been the cornerstone of enhancements to aviation safety, and therefore the commercial development of air transport, since the earliest days of flight. They are also key to security, capacity, sustainability, and efficiency.

Since Standards in themselves are only as good as they are effectively implemented, ICAO also focuses a significant amount of its activities to assisting member States in implementing the Standards which have been adopted, and in particular the countries with the most challenges, as per the "No Country Left Behind" principle.

And given that the effectiveness of implementation requires careful and objective evaluation, member States have also mandated ICAO to conduct audits, in the areas of safety and security. These help member States assess their readiness and, as appropriate, prioritize and plan their progress.

With these tools, ICAO's ambition is to help the civil aviation sector overcome the challenges it is facing.

Among the great challenges and opportunities before us, responding to the climate emergency is one of our highest priorities. We must deliver on the ICAO Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal of Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 (LTAG), that was agreed by member States at the most recent ICAO Assembly approximately one year ago. Achieving this goal will depend on unprecedented cooperation among them and with all aviation stakeholders, continuing the pace of innovation, and accelerating the aviation-cleaner energy transition.

The achievement of the LTAG will rely on the combined effect of multiple CO₂ emissions reduction measures, including the accelerated adoption of new and innovative aircraft technologies, the implementation of efficient flight operations, increased production and deployment of

sustainable aviation fuels (the “SAF” as they are called), lower carbon aviation fuels (LCAF) and other cleaner energies.

ICAO is playing a central role in coordinating and encouraging this cooperation, including in fostering the investor confidence that is key to unlocking critical resources.

I would also like to underscore the challenges and opportunities associated with welcoming the wide range of new entrants that are poised to enter the aviation market. These entrants will transform the short to medium range intra-and inter-city market, and in due course, develop into short international operations.

Considerable work is ongoing at ICAO to facilitate the safe development of unmanned aviation and advanced air mobility (AAM), which is a priority focus area for ICAO.

ICAO continues to develop provisions to enable the certified category of unmanned aircraft operations, namely internationally operated remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), primarily under instrument flight rules (IFR), in controlled airspace and at controlled aerodromes.

Additional work on Advanced Air Mobility will look at developing a holistic framework and vision, which will serve as a focal point for ICAO AAM-related work to ensure global interoperability and harmonization.

This in turn points to the need to continue enhancing our global collaboration mechanisms. I would like to encourage you to take the opportunity to explore how you can deepen your cooperation with each other and with ICAO.

During the course of this Assad Kotaite International Aviation and Safety Forum, you will also focus on the importance of security – that is, the protection against harmful interference.

The continuing security threat to the global aviation system is most effectively managed by identifying, understanding and addressing the potential risks to civil aviation, including risks to passengers and goods (baggage, cargo, and mail).

The identification of risks permits member States to determine and implement proportionate measures and controls to mitigate appropriately against each risk type.

To assist member States in this process, ICAO continues to update its Aviation Security Global Risk Context Statement.

Our aim is for the document to continue to serve as a useful resource for States to help increase awareness of security risk as it is essential for States in the development of policies and measures that are effective, proportionate, and sustainable.

In addition, the importance to ICAO of addressing the risks that conflict zones pose to civil aviation cannot be overstated.

In that regard and thanks to the substantive inputs we received, in close coordination with the Safer Skies Committee, we are in the process of issuing the third edition of the ICAO Risk Assessment Manual for Civil Aircraft Operations Over and Near Conflict Zones (Doc 10084). In addition to taking into account these contributions, we also have a programme to develop and roll-out a dedicated workshop.

Allow me to also mention that the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) is undergoing a major revision to ensure that it remains aligned with current needs, abilities, and resources available to States.

The draft second edition of the GASeP will be circulated for State consultation soon, and your feedback is important to us. I trust that this event will be one of the instances that will contribute to this feedback.

You have a very full schedule, and I look forward to hearing more about the discussions and outcomes that will have happened in Beirut.

The ICAO Middle East Regional Office, will play a key role in informing ICAO's actions following this event.

In concluding, may the discussions you hold during this Forum reflect the very same spirit of global cooperation that the namesake of this event, Assad Kotaite, so perfectly embodied.

With that, I wish you a very successful forum.

Thank you.