



**Opening keynote address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano
to the Changi Aviation Summit**

(Singapore, 19 February 2024)

*Good morning,
Honorable Minister Chee,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Directors General of Civil Aviation,
Dear Council Representatives,
Industry Representatives,
Distinguished participants,*

As the President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, I would like to commend the Government of Singapore for the excellent and opportune organization of this Summit.

I wish to start by emphasizing that ICAO is grateful to Singapore for its valuable contribution to ICAO's work. We deeply appreciate our collaboration on the ICAO-Singapore Aviation Academy (SAA) Directors General of Civil Aviation Programme on Aviation Safety which provides support to Member States in the critical area of enhancing global aviation safety.

I am also pleased to recall that last evening ICAO extended its cooperation with Singapore having signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Singapore-ICAO Next Generation Aviation Professionals Scholarship Programme (NGAP-SP) to enhance the capabilities of the NGAP to support in the implementation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and promote safety and aviation development.

We also recognize the strong and longstanding support of Singapore in aviation security through its role in ICAO AVSEC activities globally and within Asia Pacific. In addition, Singapore's generous voluntary contribution to the ICAO AVSECFAL Fund is instrumental to our overall AVSEC efforts and particularly recently to support ICAO's work to address cybersecurity threats.

ICAO also expresses our deep gratitude to Singapore for its very generous support for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Liaison Office, a newly established ICAO position located in Fiji, and the substantial additional funding contributions for PSIDS-related projects and activities.

This year, ICAO will be celebrating 80 years since the signing of the Chicago Convention, the charter that established the fundamental rules of International Air Transport and of ICAO.

The celebration of this Anniversary will provide us with the opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of international civil aviation over the course of the last eight decades, but equally important, it will provide us with the opportunity to reflect on how the development of international civil aviation could be better supported to face future challenges.

For the past 80 years, air transport has played a crucial role in the social and economic development of many countries and regions by connecting people and cultures as so accurately described in the Preamble to the Chicago Convention which recognizes that the future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world.

We have overcome obstacles that seemed insurmountable throughout our history, helping to repurpose the tools of war in our earliest days to forge peace, to the stunning recovery from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic most recently.

Safety and Security have reached the highest levels and will have to be pursued systematically and never taken for granted. Additionally, international civil aviation has initiated its route towards decarbonization, with sustainability as an uncompromisable factor in air transport development.

A great contributor to air transport development throughout the course of the years has been the relaxation of protectionist policies. It's a known fact that air transport liberalization supports air transport development.

In this regard, the efforts made in this specific region towards liberalization are truly commendable.

The liberalization of air transport in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, and particularly in Singapore, has played a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and connectivity.

The open skies policy within ASEAN has encouraged competition, resulting in more affordable airfares and greater choices for travelers. This connectivity has strengthened regional ties, facilitating easier movement of people and goods across Southeast Asia.

I wish to encourage ASEAN Member States to continue their efforts in possibly identifying also mechanisms of integration of their Air Space.

The far more critical challenge we have to face over the next two-three decades is the climate emergency.

In this regard, I wish first commend ICAO States that took the historical decision in October 2022 with the 41st ICAO Assembly's landmark adoption of a long term global aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, commonly referred to as the LTAG.

A massive leap forward has been achieved at the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November last year in Dubai just ahead COP28, with the adoption of a Global Framework for SAF and LCAF development and deployment. In particular, I wish to recall the global target to achieve of 5% CO2 emissions reduction by 2030.

Now, we must deliver.

I wish to ensure you all that ICAO is committed to supporting the implementation of the Global Framework, forging ahead through partnerships while ensuring that No Country is Left Behind. ICAO's engagement at the highest levels with investors and fuel producers will continue.

The Fininvest Hub initiative, which was so well received during CAAF/3 in Dubai will be an important project establishing a platform to facilitate investment partnerships particularly in the interest of countries and regions that do not have SAF production.

Additionally, I am happy to share that 150 States and organizations are now part of ICAO's Assistance, Capacity Building, and Training programme for SAF, known as ACT-SAF.

ACT-SAF provides training, feasibility studies, support for SAF certification and policy development, and implementation of specific SAF projects for States. I am grateful for the many partnering States and organizations that have contributed resources in the past year to ICAO in these efforts, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration with you.

Finally, I wish to recall that 2024 marks the start of the first phase of the ICAO Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or CORSIA, with 126 Volunteer States. This is an important moment for this integral element in our decarbonization efforts.

The sustainable development of civil aviation is obviously predicated on continued enhancement to safety, security, and capacity.

As I mentioned at the beginning, recent incidents and accidents remind us that we need to remain focused and not allow ourselves to become complacent.

We also need to prepare ourselves for the extraordinary potential of remotely piloted aircraft systems and advanced air mobility.

First implementation initiatives of AAM will start this year. ICAO is working on the regulatory aspects and I wish to underline that an AAM Symposium is planned in Montréal in September.

This event today gives also the opportunity to remind you of the recent circulation of invitations to participate in the Fourteenth Air Navigation Conference. Its theme of "Performance Improvement Driving Sustainability" reflects our intent to reach consensus on the rapid evolution in aviation operations and technologies, and global environmental challenges. This will include the timely and safe use of new technologies and air navigation system performance improvement.

As 2024 is the ICAO Year of Facilitation, we are particularly active in encouraging the advancement of initiatives in this field this year. In the area of facilitation, we welcome recent developments in the use of facial image biometrics for more seamless travel at Changi airport. By leveraging the ICAO Digital Travel Credential, the interoperability of these initiatives with other entities can be eased and we look forward to working with all of you to make such globally interoperable seamless travel a reality.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this year we celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of ICAO and this celebration offers the opportunity to further reflect also on how ICAO can continue to modernize itself.

After having modified certain mechanisms at the Governance level, the Organization is pursuing a number of Transformational Objectives that entail human resources, Information Technologies,

and Operational change. Gender balance, Innovation, Cybersecurity, relations with the Industry, are part of the several priorities addressed by the Council.

Additionally, in view of the 42nd ICAO Assembly in 2025, I wish to underline that the Council is working also to modernize some Assembly proceedings.

In this complex context, ICAO is now working on a new Strategic Plan that will support a re-prioritization process and will constitute the framework for the Business Plan and ICAO budget that will be submitted to the 42nd Assembly.

Before closing today, I would like to recall that the ICAO Council has designated 20 February of each year as the International Day Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families.

Respect for victims of civil aviation accidents and their families' mental, physical and spiritual well-being is paramount to ICAO. The Council has helped to assure continuous advocacy and attention for this important matter.

With the help of insights and appeals of Member States and the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International's (ACVFFI) committed representatives, ICAO is addressing this important matter through standards and recommended practices, and policies and capacity building initiatives. These will help States establish appropriate family assistance legislation, regulations, and policies.

Additionally, in our efforts to raise awareness of this important subject, the second symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families is planned to be held in The Kingdom of the Netherlands, from 26-28 November 2024.

Over the past 80 years, safeguarding human lives and well-being has been aviation's first priority.

Let us keep this front of mind as we discuss and strive to enhance the safety, security, and sustainability of flight at this Summit, and seek to find ways to raise ambitions.

On that note, I would like to wish you all an excellent Summit and express my gratitude for the opportunity to address you here today.

Thank you.