



Opening Address
by the Council President of ICAO,
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 57 DGCA Conference of the Asia Pacific Region

(Incheon, Republic of Korea, 4 July 2022)

The Honourable Hee-ryong WON,
Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport
(MOLIT)

for the Republic of Korea
The Honourable Yong-seog KIM,
Deputy Minister for Civil Aviation for the Republic of
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Distinguished Asia and Pacific Directors General of Civil
Aviation,

Honoured guests and participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to begin today by expressing my deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for its invitation to address this timely and important conference.

I also wish to thank our Korean hosts for the very warm welcome and excellent facilities which have been provided. The theme you have selected for this event is focused on the challenges of global aviation recovery, the cooperation urgently needed to make it a success, and the priority we share to assure that no country is left behind as we reconnect the world.

As routes and destinations continue to re-open, and with the summer peak travel season now upon us, the challenges of global recovery are being clearly illustrated as the world's incredible and unexpected air travel demand overwhelms industry capacities.

All stakeholders are trying their best today to cope with the staffing and infrastructure impediments now being faced, and I wish to underscore here that we need to stand together as the recovery of global connectivity continues to progress.

In this sense, the first focus of this event's theme also takes us into its second priority, on cooperation, because the issues currently confronting aviation are common to markets and operators large and small, to public and private stakeholders, and to countries and route networks both advanced and developing.

It is important that we recall in such circumstances that international aviation is a system, and that it will succeed or fail as a system. This is why we must cooperate, with determination and solidarity, to get the global network running more efficiently again.

While here in the Asia Pacific you have been confronted by some strict restrictions on international travel, and an uneven level of vaccination roll-out State-to-State, I wish to highlight that the coordination and collaboration in this region have remained *exemplary* throughout the pandemic and its aftermath.

This result has been tremendously facilitated by the ICAO mechanisms established for this purpose, including your region's Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG), your Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AP) and your Regional Aviation Security Coordination Forum (RASCF).

I also wish to congratulate APAC DGCAs for their leadership and very timely and effective establishment of the ICAO Asia Pacific COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG), which has served as a key mechanism for response and recovery coordination and data sharing.

The work and results achieved through this Group has also been instrumental in helping countries in the APAC region to ease their border control measures, and to re-open their travel markets to fully vaccinated travelers. We encourage all countries to make progress on this as quickly as possible.

I would like to acknowledge the role being played by the ICAO Secretariat in driving these collaborative results, and notably the ICAO APAC Regional Office team.

The ICAO Council and Secretariat are also continuing to very actively address all response and recovery priorities for international civil aviation globally, and it was my honour very recently to accept on behalf of the Organization the inaugural Flight Safety Foundation Richard Teller Crane Founder's Award, in recognition of the global results collectively achieved through the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART).

I just mentioned a few moments ago the evident increase of travel demand of recent weeks. More in general, with respect to our latest recovery indicators at the global level, ICAO's analyses reveal clear signs of encouraging growth.

The number of passengers carried from January to April of this year increased by 65% compared to the same period in 2021, while aircraft departures increased by 30%.

Airline seat capacity grew by 32% during the same period, and with continuing supportive conditions for travel demand we are now projecting a stronger overall recovery this year compared to last.

These results are encouraging, especially when we consider what re-opened travel and tourism markets and other positive economic and sustainability benefits mean for so many societies and businesses globally, but as noted earlier, we still face many hurdles on the road to full capacity.

ICAO's engagement in this region has continued very actively recently, with the Legal Seminar we conducted in Seoul this April and elsewhere with the Global Implementation Support Symposium (GISS).organized in Turkey just last week.

This Symposium was an inaugural event, bringing together the priorities of ICAO's former World Aviation Forums (IWAFs), Global Aviation Cooperation Symposiums (GACSSs), and the Global Aviation Training and TRAINAIR PLUS Symposiums.

Our objective in merging these fora was to drive greater efficiencies for both ICAO and the States it serves, and we also recognized the value in highlighting together the full scope of implementation and collaboration initiatives we are working on today in support of aviation recovery, innovation, resilience, and sustainable development.

The GISS event also served as an important platform for highlighting how ICAO's Technical Cooperation, Assistance, and Global Training areas are playing such a key role in global aviation implementation support planning, projects, and outcomes.

Implementation support is also a fundamental factor in assuring no country is left behind in international civil aviation, and ICAO is therefore pursuing a much more integrated approach today to its planning and realization.

The ICAO Council has been leading these efforts by adopting a new Implementation Support Policy earlier this year, and it now fully aligns the management of ICAO's Technical Cooperation and Technical Assistance programmes.

Effective implementation support and assistance also relies very strongly on close collaboration, and on partners and donors to help lift needful States to new and more effective levels of compliance and connectivity.

This is a key priority for the Asia Pacific Region, and in particular for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS).

As was highlighted by Secretary General Salazar last month, at the Second Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting, ICAO is currently implementing a long-term sustainable aviation development roadmap for these countries, using the findings and recommendations of the related needs analysis we conducted in 2019 and with very strong reliance on international donors and partners.

Other examples where we have taken a leading role in establishing and managing multi-stakeholder initiatives include our Aviation Partnerships for Sustainable Development (APSD); the Aviation Safety Implementation Assistance Partnership (ASIAP); the Industry High Level Group (IHLG); and the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA).

Implementation support is also a key enabler of the CORSIA initiative, and we have been encouraged by APAC State participation levels in our related ACT-CORSIA programme and the CORSIA Buddy Partnerships.

In the same vein, ICAO has also launched a new assistance, capacity-building and training programme for Sustainable Aviation Fuels, denominated ACT-SAF, and this will provide opportunities for States to develop their full potential in SAF development and deployment.

Many APAC States are now taking concrete steps to scale up SAF production, and establish and validate supply chains, and several airlines here are committing to long-term offtake agreements.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In concluding today, I would also like to touch upon some of the key outcomes ICAO will be seeking with your support in the coming weeks, notably at the upcoming High-level Meeting later this month on States' Long Term Aspirational Goal for aviation emissions reduction, and subsequently at the 41st ICAO Assembly this September.

The LTAG High-level Meeting is an important opportunity for States to consider and embolden their environmental protection ambitions in advance of their decisions at the Assembly.

Climate change is a global challenge, and strong collaborative action and cooperation across regions will be critical. It also poses some acute near-term risks to civil aviation infrastructure and operations, notably due to sea level rise impacting certain airports, turbulence risks from jet stream changes, and the increasingly extreme weather patterns we're already seeing in most world regions.

I am very encouraged by the strong support shown by Asia Pacific States to the ICAO LTAG Global Aviation Dialogues in April this year, and we should also expect very robust discussions on this topic at the Panel you've arranged, and in the subsequent Agenda Item on Aviation and Environment.

Collaboration, and a unified global approach, are fundamental to the overall objectives we share to mitigate, decrease, and eventually eliminate air transport emissions.

The key themes we have focused the 41st Assembly around are 'innovation' and 'resilience', with the sustainability priorities just underscored being a common and urgent factor under each.

Decisions supporting the digitization of a contactless passenger experience, including with respect to interoperable health certificates and the ICAO standard VDS-NC, will be critical for the Assembly to make progress on.

This speaks to the ongoing digitization of our sector more widely, and the critical cybersecurity solutions needed to support that.

It also speaks to the new types of aircraft and air services now coming to our skies, and the key priority to integrate them safely and securely into traditional and non-traditional global airspace.

On the eve of the Assembly, we have once again organized an Innovation Symposium and Exhibition to help survey the current air transport ecosystem, and I would encourage all aviation leaders to explore and take part in that.

Going forward, ICAO encourages the leadership of this Region's Directors General of Civil Aviation in achieving concrete progress toward our sector's LTAG, the recovery and resilience priorities of the 41st Assembly, and other key objectives.

We are seeing that leadership today as you work to realize GASP-compliant, national Safety Management Systems (SMS) among your industry operators and service providers, as well as strong State Safety Programmes within your government authorities.

This also brings to mind the overall institutional strength of this Region's civil aviation authorities, and how important it is for you to continuously advocate on behalf of your agencies for strong commitments and investments toward CAA infrastructure, budgets, and human resources.

ICAO was deeply encouraged to review related commitments from the Pacific Ministers in attendance at the Second Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting, in addition to their agreement to strengthen the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO).

As we emerge from the pandemic, renewed focus should also be placed on the 2018 Beijing Declaration commitments which the pandemic put off track to varying extents.

Lastly I would like to re-emphasize that the priority themes you've established for this 57th DGCA are critical to current global objectives, and that the distinguished experts and leaders you've assembled to discuss and address them, notably during the high-level panel discussion later this morning, should drive important outcomes here this week.

I am confident that we can make some much needed progress together, and I wish everyone a very productive and engaging 57th Asia and Pacific DGCA.

Thank you.