



## **Video Remarks**

**by ICAO Secretary General**

**Juan Carlos Salazar**

**to the ICAO Facilitation Regional Forum**

*(Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 7 July)*

1. I am honoured to welcome you to this ICAO Facilitation Regional Forum.
2. Your gathering in Ulaanbaatar is particularly meaningful as it coincides with Mongolia's celebration of 100 years of civil aviation. Since that first YU-13 aircraft landed in Ulaanbaatar in 1925, Mongolia and the entire region have transformed dramatically.
3. I would like to express ICAO's congratulations to Mongolia on this remarkable milestone, and our gratitude for the Government of Mongolia's generous hosting of this significant event. Your support is enabling experts and decision-makers from this region to shape the future of facilitation in the Asia-Pacific region.
4. This is extremely important, because we anticipate that global air passenger traffic will nearly triple in the coming 25 years – from 4.6 billion passengers in 2024 to 12.4 billion by 2050 – with Asia-Pacific leading this growth. This growth will demand strategic and proactive investment in aviation systems and facilitation infrastructure across the board.
5. Facilitation is at the heart of efficient, secure border crossings for people, goods, and aircraft, serving as the foundation upon which this projected growth must be built. This critical importance of facilitation was affirmed in the Doha Declaration concluded as a key outcome of the Ministerial segment of the ICAO Facilitation Conference that took place in Doha, Qatar, in April of this year. This ambitious Declaration, as well as the participation of more than 50 Ministers and 2000 conference attendees, highlights a global commitment to air transport facilitation, through ICAO.

6. Facilitation is also at core of ICAO's Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2050. The ambition that Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All is one of the six stated Strategic Goals, highlighting ICAO's focus on advancing facilitation in the decades to come.
7. To manage the foreseen expansion of aviation in the Asia-Pacific region effectively, international standardization remains fundamental to ensuring consistency and interoperability across the global aviation network.
8. This is why ICAO Annex 9 is crucial – it provides standards for national cooperation, travel documents, border management, accessibility, and passenger data systems that enable seamless travel across borders.
9. When effectively implemented, these standards do more than simply facilitate movement; they strengthen aviation's broader role in sustainable development while fostering a global marketplace of solution providers.
10. The stakes of getting this right are significant for all of us in the global aviation community.
11. Global air transport contributes over \$4.1 trillion to GDP and supports 86.5 million jobs, and air cargo represents 33 percent of global trade value.
12. However, these economic benefits are undermined when inefficient facilitation processes increase costs and slow supply chains.
13. Seamless processes that build trust and enhance connectivity are therefore key to enhancing the competitiveness of your economies.
14. Efficient facilitation is especially crucial for landlocked States like Mongolia that are more dependent on connectivity by air. In this regard, in response to a decision from the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the Assembly, ICAO has proposed Aviation Needs Analysis for Landlocked Developing Countries to be undertaken in 2026 with the support of States including Mongolia. Facilitation will be an important area of consideration in the study and we look forward to contributions of funding and experts from Mongolia and other States to undertake this important future work.

15. ICAO is ready to assist all Member States in the Asia-Pacific to address the unique and diverse challenges they face.
16. The Pacific Small Island Developing States also face unique connectivity challenges due to their geographical constraints.
17. Our new Liaison Office in Fiji is delivering tailored support to Pacific Island States, illustrating ICAO's commitment to ensuring No Country is Left Behind regardless of geography.
18. The Asia-Pacific region includes both economically prosperous States and developing nations with vastly different resources, which is why another part of our solution involves creating frameworks for States to help each other.
19. To address these diverse regional challenges, today's forum focuses on two key strategic priorities that will determine our collective success.
20. The first is strengthening cooperation and collaboration across borders and sectors. Effective facilitation requires seamless coordination between government authorities, border agencies, airports, airlines, and other stakeholders. We must break down traditional silos and build truly integrated approaches that span the entire passenger and cargo journey.
21. The second priority is accelerating the adoption of digital innovation through globally interoperable technologies.
22. By strategically implementing internationally standardized digital solutions, we can create seamless processes while ensuring compatibility between systems at different stages of development and investment capability, allowing all States to participate regardless of their current technological infrastructure.
23. During this forum, you will gain actionable insights on implementing National Facilitation Programmes and Committees, discover regional cooperative initiatives that build practical capacity, and examine transformative innovations like the ICAO Digital Travel Credential.

24. This technology promises to revolutionize border crossings, making them more efficient and secure. It leverages core infrastructure like the ICAO Public Key Directory.
25. Your discussions over the next two days are critically important. Rarely do different authorities convene to focus specifically on regional facilitation challenges.
26. Seize this opportunity to engage, communicate your priorities, and share your perspectives.
27. Your insights and recommendations from this forum will inform deliberations at the 42nd ICAO Assembly in September, strengthening both regional and global facilitation initiatives.
28. Your contributions here will also help shape the implementation of ICAO's Strategic Plan for 2026-2050, our roadmap toward enhanced safety, sustainability, and seamless mobility for all.
29. Put simply, the work we do together over these two days matters – it contributes to the global efforts to create an air transport system that truly serves everyone.
30. Let us approach this challenge with determination, drawing on our collective expertise and guided by a shared vision.
31. I wish you enriching and fruitful discussions.
32. Thank you.