



**Opening Remarks by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma,
to the 2026 TRIP Symposium**

(Montréal, Canada, 22 September 2026)

*Distinguished guests,
Colleagues,*

It is my great honour to welcome you to this Twenty-First ICAO TRIP Symposium and Exhibition.

As air transport professionals and travellers ourselves, we see the value and importance of the ICAO TRIP in our daily lives.

We feel the airport experience getting easier each year, but it is still not easy enough.

from booking to boarding and finally border crossing, the whole travel process is more simple than a decade ago.

And behind all this greater comfort and accessibility, lie improvements to our privacy, and our security.

We have come to expect seamless and contact-less experiences, as well as technologies that allow us to move through the journey with less friction.

And so, we also notice when these technologies are unavailable.

One example is when we are repeatedly asked to provide information that could otherwise be securely and efficiently verified.

Let me put it another way: travel can be frustrating and stressful.

And this problem is why we are here.

We are working to reduce the stress and frustration of flying by offering a more convenient and predictable trip / for every passenger, every time. We are always ensuring that security, privacy, and trust are at the heart of that experience.

The ICAO Traveller Identification Programme / is able to do this because it has successfully united our member States, international organizations, and industry.

For over half a century, ICAO has provided the global framework for secure traveller identification. The successful alignment of all stakeholders around ICAO specifications and standards over the decades / has resulted in unprecedented levels of mutual recognition and trust of travel credentials.

The TRIP Programme, and this event, build on this strong and proud foundation.

Work through our TRIP Programme is critical to the achievement of ICAO's strategy / to deliver air transport for all by 2050, with zero fatalities, and net-zero carbon emissions.

States will continue to strengthen border controls while facilitating and encouraging legitimate travel.

And as air transport continues to grow, so will the expectations of passengers and industry stakeholders alike.

Ultimately, journeys will become secure, seamless, and contactless.

Innovation will be key.

Equally crucial will be the consistent application of ICAO Standards and specifications, robust governance, collaboration across borders, and mutual trust among States.

The international framework for traveller identification and facilitation is formed by the ICAO Public Key Directory, Annex 9, and Doc 9303. This framework underpins global interoperability and the trust that is so crucial.

As part of the broader ICAO TRIP Strategy, the ICAO Digital Travel Credential, or DTC, represents the next step in the evolution of trusted traveller identification. This builds upon decades of progress in secure document issuance, verification and interoperable border management.

Meanwhile, many pilot projects are now entering full operation, with innovative concepts being transformed into practical, scalable solutions.

However, ICAO recognizes the challenges that arise when States, airlines, and other private entities develop DTCs without aligning with ICAO specifications.

This fragmentation means that DTC "wallets" are unable to interoperate, leading to wasted effort, lost resources, and undermined trust across borders.

The responsibility before us is to ensure that these new measures are globally interoperable, so that systems from different countries work together to support international travel.

ICAO is urging all partners—States and the private sector alike—to align their DTCs and supporting systems fully with ICAO specifications. Only by doing so can we ensure worldwide mutual recognition and trust, leading to true interoperability for international travel.

ICAO Annex 9 Standards will serve as the shared foundation for digital identity management programmes, aiming to uphold trust, security, and inclusion.

By ensuring adherence to these standards, we can offer travellers consistent, convenient, and secure processes as they cross borders.

In this regard, I want to be clear: each Digital Travel Credential developed outside a globally interoperable framework, risks limiting the benefits of seamless travel and mutual recognition.

This is why the theme of this year's Symposium, "Putting Trust into Practice: Towards Trusted Travel Identity for All," is very relevant.

Putting trust into practice means working together to build one global system, not many separate parts.

This Symposium is devoted to supporting practical implementation.

The goal is to enable all states to move from pilot programmes to wide-scale, lasting traveller identification systems.

I ask you to share your own experiences in implementing trusted traveller identity solutions and digital credentials at this symposium, and to learn from the experiences of your colleagues. Together, by exchanging insights, we can advance our shared work.

I especially encourage you to discuss your approaches to DTCs, and commit to full alignment with ICAO guidance and standards. This is our most urgent and consequential task.

Seamless travel worldwide is our ultimate goal.

As we move forward toward this goal, we will strengthen the security and efficiency of travel. This will happen with the integration of electronic Machine-Readable Travel Documents, ICAO Digital Travel Credentials, biometrics, and trusted inspection systems.

But we must remain vigilant as new developments impact digital trust.

The emergence of quantum computing, for instance, presents a strategic challenge to the cryptographic foundations on which today's travel documents and digital credentials rely.

In response, building quantum-safe cryptography into future ICAO specifications is essential. This will ensure the long-term authenticity, integrity and interoperability of traveller identification systems.

I ask you to take this Symposium as an opportunity to prepare for these challenges. Engage in dialogue on innovation, interoperability, and emerging topics such as quantum-safe security.

By doing so, we can better equip ourselves to respond to a changing landscape.

ICAO is committed to supporting States through capacity-building, guidance material and implementation assistance to ensure that all States can participate in the future of trusted traveller identity.

But ICAO's work alone cannot meet all the challenges we face.

Enduring progress rests on the continued collaboration of States, issuing authorities, border agencies, international organizations, standards bodies, and industry.

Over the next three days, you will explore in depth the evolving ecosystem of trusted traveller identity.

It is our shared responsibility to advance trusted traveller identity systems that are secure, interoperable, and inclusive.

We must ensure that travel becomes smarter, more inclusive, and seamless, without compromising security or convenience.

By doing so, we will sustain the international trust that underpins the development of air transport worldwide.

With these thoughts in mind, it is my pleasure to declare the Twenty-First ICAO TRIP Symposium and Exhibition open.

Thank you.