



**Remarks by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the AERO EXPO 2023 of El Salvador**

(San Salvador, 10 October 2023)

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Distinguidos Ministros y representantes gubernamentales,
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Estimada Representante de El Salvador en el Consejo de la OACI, Sra. Katherin Martínez,
Estimados participantes,*

Como Presidente del Consejo de la OACI, quisiera expresar la gratitud de la organización por la oportunidad de participar en la primera AERO EXPO de El Salvador.

La OACI se siente alentada por el reconocimiento de la importancia de promover la aviación y el crecimiento sostenible del transporte aéreo aquí y en toda la región como un catalizador crucial para su desarrollo sostenible. Lo siento pero continuo en inglés.

ICAO is also encouraged by the synergies among governments of Central America, and I am sure that this event will enhance advocacy and awareness around aviation priorities.

Sustainability and resilience, inclusivity, digitalization and automation, and challenges around the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic are among the factors driving the significant transformation of aviation that we are currently observing.

Similarly, innovation is firmly anchored in the genes of this type of event, and ICAO is excited and gratified by your call for young people, in particular, young women, to be part of the exchange of ideas and cooperation towards sustainable aviation growth that will happen here. This is crucially important not least because aviation faces a shortage of skilled workers in the near future.

At this AERO EXPO 2023, companies will be providing information about career opportunities for newcomers and already qualified personnel. The February 2023 Aero show in Ilopango, and other major aviation events like the expansion of the main terminal of the International Airport of El Salvador, are also clear demonstrations of the ongoing aviation growth in El Salvador, and the opportunities this growth presents for the next generation.

Moreover, the promotion of air transport liberalization, such as illustrated by the recent ratification of the El Salvador-Brazil air transport agreement, reveal a clear strategy for the growth of aviation in El Salvador and in the region.

OXFORD ECONOMICS reports that at least 4% of the GDP of El Salvador, about 480 million USD, is dependent on the air transport sector and foreign tourists arriving by air.

The aviation sector in El Salvador through all its different stakeholders employs directly at least 6,000 people, with 25,800 indirect jobs and 55,800 jobs related with the foreign tourists arriving by air to the country. Similarly, with air transport growth in El Salvador, the State has accumulated USD 9.2 billion in foreign direct investment.

El Salvador is a major airline hub, is host to a major aircraft maintenance facility, and is one of the top States in aviation infrastructure development in the region.

Collaboration among States, with ICAO, and with other international civil aviation entities has been and will remain key.

This is especially true when there are such differences in size and resources among States.

The work done by El Salvador and the other five Central American States, all together in an integrated group and supported by COCESNA, in assuring regional air transport safety and security performance is bearing fruit in different areas.

We are observing a steady and outstanding recovery in air operations, and sustainable compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

As I mentioned before, ICAO is proud of the strong regional collaboration that exists in Central America, where different aviation regional projects and activities have been accomplished due to this integration, such as the strong political commitment and support for all Central American States to obtain the highest level of compliance with ICAO's safety and security standards, the full integration and joint work on air navigation services, and the "one block" approach to air transport and air navigation implementation.

This is demonstrated in many ways, such as in the support to the Regional Safety Oversight Organization ACSA, provision of Search and rescue, collaboration in Aircraft accident and incident investigation, airspace management, Flight Procedure Programme provisions, and many others.

The lead by each Central American State in these common regional activities is also remarkable, as, for example, El Salvador's lead on safety oversight and safety management activities.

Similar progress has been achieved in Environmental Protection activities.

I wish to highlight the regional acceptance and incorporation of the Central American States to the ICAO programmes and initiatives, voluntarily participation in the ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, CORSIA, as well as their willingness to prepare State Action Plans on CO₂ Emission Reduction Activities to showcase the actions and advancing initiatives in environmental protection.

I would also like to commend El Salvador and the rest of Central American States that at the 10th Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the North America, Central America, and Caribbean Region in June 2023 in Varadero, Cuba, signed onto the ACT-SAF programme of ICAO, which will promote the development of sustainable aviation fuels. These fuels are critical to achieving our net zero objectives.

Aviation decarbonization is a top priority for ICAO and will be reached through the implementation of the so-called basket of measures: technology, more efficient air navigation routes, Sustainable Aviation Fuels or SAFs, including Low Carbon Aviation Fuels, and offsetting through market measures. We know that SAFs and Low Carbon Aviation Fuels will play the main role in the short-medium term. Between 55% and 60% of CO₂ emission reduction in 2050 will be reached through SAFs and Low Carbon Aviation Fuels.

Consequently, the short-term objective is to deploy the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels, making it both affordable and accessible.

ICAO is working very hard with fuel producers, institutional and private investors to make this happen particularly by fostering international partnerships and cooperation with the energy and financial sectors to accelerate much-needed investment in this area.

Investments require a clear regulatory global framework in order to provide certainty.

For this reason, ICAO has called a High-Level Conference on Civil Aviation Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3), late November in Dubai, just ahead COP/28, with the objective to adopt a SAF framework that would provide States, Aviation Stakeholders, Fuel Producers and Investors with clear perspectives.

1. Before concluding, I wish to highlight the great commitment of ICAO to provide implementation support to member States in line with the organization's No Country Left Behind initiative.
2. In fact, the evolving global air transport system that I mentioned earlier is making demands that in general many States are not well equipped to address; and this is to the detriment of the entire civil aviation community.

For example, a review of global safety audit scores highlights that some States continue to face significant challenges in areas such as Aerodromes and Ground Aids and Air Navigation Services. These are among the most important foundational elements of a safe and efficient air transport system.

3. In June 2023, we rebranded the ICAO Technical Cooperation Bureau to the Capacity Development and Implementation Bureau to more accurately reflect our commitment to all implementation support activities on behalf of States, including technical cooperation, technical assistance, and implementation support.

ICAO is fully committed to expanding these implementation activities globally. However, this work can only be done if we collectively, as stakeholders of the aviation community, come together and pool our data, expertise, and resources for the benefit of all States, in the spirit of cooperation that we see here in this region.

In concluding today, I would like to express full appreciation to El Salvador for its support to ICAO, and for the seat it holds on the ICAO Council, currently well occupied by its Representative M.s Katherin Martinez, and my conviction that this AERO EXPO will serve to strengthen El Salvador's commitment to aviation development to the benefit of all States in the Central American region.

Thank you.