



**Opening remarks by the
President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano
to the 58th APAC DGCA Conference**

(Dhaka, Bangladesh, 15 October 2023)

His Excellency Md. Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

*His Excellency Md. Mokammel Hossain, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism,
Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Mafidur Rahman, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority,
Distinguished Asia and Pacific Directors General of Civil Aviation,
Distinguished participants,*

On behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and as President of its governing Council, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for its hosting of to this highly significant regional conference.

I am grateful for this opportunity to address you today, and I would like to acknowledge the warm welcome and hospitality that we have received, setting the scene for productive discussions.

This year marks Bangladesh's 50th anniversary since joining the ICAO global family, on 22 December 1972, a few months after the Independence.

It is quite befitting that this event coincides with this anniversary, as it provides yet another pertinent illustration of Bangladesh's consistent and growing support for ICAO's work since its adherence to the Chicago Convention.

The theme of this 58th APAC DGCA meeting is "Promoting ICAO Gender Equality Programme in conjunction with Next Generation Aviation Professionals initiative."

Air Transport development is facing and will face human resources challenges also due to the increasing complexity of the overall system from the technological and regulatory point of view. To address these challenges, it is crucial to support the introduction of next generation professionals to civil aviation, and, in particular, of women. In this later regard, we must reach gender balance also in aviation by 2030 in coherence with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger and freight demand in the Asia and Pacific region is forecast to regain higher growth rates.

This will be an opportunity for the Region that will require a concerted effort by States and industries, especially to ensure continued improvements to aviation safety and security, efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.

In this regard, some challenges have been revealed through ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit programme.

Recent assessments are showing that the levels of effective implementation of ICAO Standards are, in some cases, not improving at the desired levels.

Unfortunately, there are cases where there have been significant decreases in this metric.

ICAO will support States to address these challenges and also encourage them to collaborate to optimize the use of aviation safety resources, including through the regional coordination mechanisms as the RSOOs.

In parallel, capacity building globally and here in Asia Pacific is a key priority for ICAO.

Let me underscore that these challenges also provide us with opportunities.

ICAO is modernizing and transforming itself to help you fully seize the opportunities presented by the technological and operational evolution and revolution.

Transformation, innovation, efficiency and effectiveness in delivery are embedded in our 2023-2025 Business Plan.

A new crosscutting Transformational Objective will orient ICAO's work towards bringing the much-needed changes, resulting in an ICAO better fit-for-purpose to support its Member States.

An important illustration of our transformation is the relaunch of our technical cooperation activities, which are undertaken by the Capacity Development and Implementation Bureau, as it is now known.

ICAO's new Implementation Support Policy takes a more holistic approach.

ICAO will better support States through training, implementation packages, also known as iPacks, or customized implementation support projects. In this way we will ensure States in APAC and globally have suitable options to support their capacity development and implementation needs.

I would also like to highlight that ICAO has recently taken a major step forward in this region with the provision of dedicated onsite support to the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), through the appointment of an ICAO Liaison Officer (LO) in August this year, with the onsite deployment in Nadi, Fiji by the end of this month.

Additionally, we should recall the tenth anniversary of the establishment of APAC Regional Sub-Office in Beijing, whose crucial work in supporting cooperation in this region was

acknowledged both by a special ceremony in June this year, and by the signing of an updated supplementary agreement with the Civil Aviation Administration of China for which ICAO is particularly appreciative.

Additionally, I am pleased to note that the APAC Office has resumed its signature implementation support activity, the 'Combined Action Teams (CAT)' programme, this year. I am particularly pleased to highlight that APAC's newest ICAO Member State, Tuvalu, received an Aviation Security CAT in September 2023, which is the first ever technical assistance mission received by Tuvalu.

On the subject of Environment, I would like to acknowledge the APAC States' commitment to environmental protection, particularly in the areas of implementing CORSIA and State Action Plans, and in participating in the ACT-SAF programme, which is critical to ramping up production of sustainable aviation fuels.

With the decision that you took last year at the 41st ICAO Assembly on Long Term Aspirational Goal to decarbonize aviation by 2050, aviation decarbonization is a top priority for ICAO. It 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 of COP/28 with the objective to adopt a SAF and LCAF global framework that would provide States, Aviation Stakeholders, Fuel Producers and Investors with clear perspectives.

In this regard, I wish to invite all of you to participate and be engaged in these discussions in Dubai aiming at reaching another historical outcome that would gladly bring to the attention of COP/28 one week later.

Before closing, let me recall the commitment that was made by APAC States at the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation, which endorsed the Beijing Declaration.

States recognized the need to coordinate aviation matters of regional and global importance, and the need to foster collaboration on a common platform as means to harmonizing and accelerating regional aviation growth.

Given all the considerations and factors I have highlighted today, and the need for progress on this commitment, I am grateful for the Government of India's confirmation that it will host the Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in Delhi, India, in the near future.

It will provide the setting at the political level for the Asia and Pacific States to declare a vision for the resilient and dynamic air transport system for the region.

Today, too, we have a terrific opportunity to carry forward these priorities.

On that note, I would like to express my gratitude once again for this precious opportunity to present ICAO's perspectives, and to reiterate its ongoing commitment and support to aviation development in the APAC region.

Thank you.

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