



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore's
Distinguished Visitors Programme
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I sincerely thank the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore for the invitation to speak before you about my vision for aviation in the year 2020.

It all begins with growth.

In 2020, there will be 4.1 billion passengers on commercial airliners worldwide, compared to 2.3 today. More telling perhaps, there will be 36 million flights, compared to 25 million, an incredible increase of more than 30 per cent. That means a lot more planes flying in what we already feel are congested skies.

And yet, in 2020, aviation is safer than it has ever been. There are fewer accidents and no region of the world has an accident rate that is higher than the world average.

There is no magic to this. Because information sharing has become our *modus operandi*, we are better able to identify hazards and assess risks. We manage risks before they become accidents.

States and service providers have a well-established safety management approach to how they conduct their business. The information they derive from these systems further helps in analysing situations and developing tailored solutions.

Investments by States of more than 80 billion dollars in air navigation infrastructure, under the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, has further improved safety, with more efficient routes, fewer delays, and better passenger service.

One of the major obstacles to improving safety in the early part of the decade was the alarming number of accidents associated with runway safety, not only between airplanes but with airplanes going off the runway.

It was in fact the number one killer.

Under ICAO, a multidisciplinary approach was instituted which brought together representatives from airlines, airports, air navigation services providers and regulatory authorities. We met the challenge together.

In security, again in spite of the extraordinary increase in passengers and departures, security is more effective and efficient than it has ever been.

I'm sure we all remember the long line ups at airports and the security checks which got a lot of people upset. Airlines were also upset due to the costly disruption at airports and re-routings.

In 2020, many security checks are invisible to the passenger.

Huge improvements in Advanced Imaging Technology and other technologies have made it possible to produce equipment that keeps delays and inconvenience to a bare minimum, while significantly increasing the effectiveness of processes.

Security intelligence has been integrated more closely into security measures. Anticipating and countering threats before they materialize is the norm. There is unprecedented cooperation among State services – law enforcement agencies, customs, immigration, passport authorities – resulting in more integrated security solutions.

At the same time, advanced electronic passports and visas considerably speed up the processing of passengers in and out of terminals.

Travellers have rediscovered the joys of travelling by air. They fully understand the need for security measures that remain. They know that their luggage and cargo flying in the belly of their aircraft have been thoroughly screened and are safe. Passengers recognize that their right to privacy is respected. Public confidence is at an all time high.

Airlines also benefit from more efficient security. Fewer disruptions mean reduced costs and money that can be invested in better passenger service.

And what about the environment?

Having come under enormous pressure in the early part of the decade, the aviation sector has now surpassed its initial environmental targets and is well on its way to a carbon neutral future.

This is helped by the efficiencies in air navigation systems I spoke about a few moments ago. Shorter routes mean fewer emissions as well as more money in the coffers of airlines to buy more efficient aircraft. A virtuous circle!

What's more, many airlines are also using sustainable alternative fuels developed over the past ten years. They are now readily available in many parts of the world in the form of drop in fuels.

Overall, in 2020, international aviation contributes more and more to the economic development of our global society, promoting peace and understanding among nations and peoples of the world. And it is doing so in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.

There we are – my vision for aviation in the year 2020. I am convinced we can achieve it. I may even have been too conservative. Perhaps we can do much better. That will be up to us all.

The point I want to make with you today is that it is not a pipe dream. We are today well positioned to significantly improve the three fundamental pillars of civil aviation during this decade – safety, security and environmental protection.

The basis for my optimism is the outcome of the remarkable results of the recent ICAO Assembly.

In the case of safety, the Assembly fully endorsed a comprehensive strategy formulated at a High-level Safety Conference in March of this year.

Our aim was to reduce the global accident rate and to make sure that no Region has an accident rate which exceeded the world average by more than twice.

The strategy consists of five basic elements.

One is a commitment by ICAO Member States to share information regarding the performance of their respective safety oversight systems, which assesses their degree of implementation of ICAO standards. This will help identify deficiencies and correct them more quickly and effectively.

Another is greater emphasis on transparency through an international mechanism for the sharing of safety information, based on globally-harmonized safety metrics and analysis methods.

On this point, I am happy to mention a Memorandum of Understanding on the Creation of a Global Safety Information Exchange which ICAO signed during the Assembly with major State and industry partners: the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States, the Commission of the European Union and the International Air Transport Association.

In time, I expect that more partners will join the Exchange and that we will eventually share this information with the general public.

Now, to support transparency and greater sharing of information, the Assembly also agreed on a code of conduct to make sure that the sensitive information collected is used only for improving safety. Without this protection, information would not flow as freely and quickly as we would like throughout the aviation system.

On the subject of regional disparity in safety levels, we agreed that the best option is an increased involvement of regional safety oversight organizations. In cases where individual States do not have the resources or the expertise to resolve safety concerns on their own, dedicated regional bodies can leverage expertise and resources among targeted States in a coordinated and targeted manner.

Finally, the Assembly gave its blessing to the creation of a new Annex to the Chicago Convention dedicated to safety management processes. The objective here is to facilitate the promulgation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices, which are absolutely necessary to achieving the highest levels of safety around the world.

What was perhaps most noticeable in all of this was a new mindset. We are gradually moving away from a largely traditional and reactive model, to a predictive model, one that relies on performance-based and results-oriented parameters. This will get us to our Vision for 2020.

Let me now turn to security, which has been in the news quite a lot lately.

Prior to the Assembly, we had prepared a number of proposals for adoption, including a Comprehensive Security Strategy and a revision to Annex 17 on Security, both of which I will discuss in a moment.

As you might suspect, the attempted bombing of a commercial airliner on 25 December 2009 focussed our attention on a more immediate situation. Shortly after the incident, I convened a series of Ministerial-level conferences on aviation security in Mexico City Tokyo, Abuja and Abu Dhabi. The purpose was to address this and other types of new and emerging threat to the security of flights.

I was extremely pleased with the results. In all instances, there was a strong commitment by States, together with industry, to protect civil aviation from all kinds of terrorist threats. As important I thought was a strong expression of collective responsibility for taking action.

Underlying this consensus was the recognition that terrorism is a global problem that requires global solutions. Security measures must therefore be uniform and consistently implemented in all States to be effective. This can only be achieved with the full cooperation of States, in collaboration with key stakeholders, including industry partners.

Out of those regional conferences came a Declaration on Aviation Security which was unanimously endorsed by the Assembly. It reaffirms international commitment to enhancing aviation security, notably cargo security, in a collaborate and proactive approach through such measures as:

- screening technologies to detect prohibited articles;
- strengthening international standards;
- improving security information-sharing; and,
- providing capacity-building assistance to States in need.

US President Barack Obama commended ICAO's Declaration which, and I quote, "forges a historic new foundation for aviation security that will better protect our world from evolving terrorist threats."

The other major decision of the Assembly was the adoption of a proactive, Comprehensive Aviation Security Strategy for the next six years. It succeeds the Aviation Security Plan of Action adopted to deal with events of 11 September 2001.

This proposed strategy comprises seven focus areas:

- addressing new and existing threats;
- promoting innovative, effective and efficient security approaches;
- promoting the sharing of information amongst Member States;
- promoting global compliance and establishing the sustainable aviation security oversight capability of States;
- improving human factors and security culture;
- promoting the development of mutual recognition for aviation security processes; and,
- emphasizing capacity building.

Whether we like it or not, aircraft and air transport facilities will always remain attractive targets to terrorists. A recent example is the attempt to blow up an aircraft in flight using a bomb hidden in a printer ink cartridge.

Although this attempt failed, it showed that even when terrorists don't fully succeed with their attacks, they can still destabilize the system and reduce public confidence in air travel.

This was addressed at a Diplomatic Conference held under the auspices of ICAO last September, in Beijing. Two treaties adopted by the Conference further criminalize the act of using civil aircraft as a weapon and of using dangerous materials to attack aircraft or other targets on the ground.

Moreover, the unlawful transport of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their related material now becomes punishable, while making a threat against civil aviation may now trigger criminal liability.

From all that I have said on security, the message is clear – any form of unlawful interference against civil aviation must not and will not be tolerated. Again, a solid footing for achieving our Vision for 2020.

Like security, it seems that aviation and the environment is a regular feature in the news media. For aviation, it is all for the wrong reasons. In spite of the tremendous progress of the past 40 years in reducing its impact on the environment, aviation is systematically painted as the black sheep.

We are conscious of the fact that we represent 2 per cent of CO₂ emissions, and we are hard at work on solutions.

We went to the Assembly with a good record, including the first globally harmonized agreement from a sector for addressing CO₂ emissions, a global framework for the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation and a target of 2013 for developing a CO₂ standard for aircraft.

From the Assembly, we were looking for a clear policy statement in three major areas:

- more ambitious environmental goals;
- the development and the application of a framework of market-based measures; and,
- measures to assist States.

We were well served.

Discussions were sometimes difficult but we were able to adopt a Resolution which confirmed ICAO's leadership in civil aviation environmental protection.

The Resolution further reaffirmed that the climate change issue as it applies to international aviation must be managed and resolved through ICAO, in a manner that is fully complementary of the manner in which the UNFCCC operates.

By adopting the Resolution, the Assembly demonstrated once again ICAO's capacity to unite aviation on some of the most challenging issues of our time. In real terms, this means:

- further endorsement of the global aspirational goal of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to year 2050;
- a medium-term global aspirational goal from 2020 that would ensure that while the international aviation sector continues to grow, its global CO₂ emissions would be stabilized at 2020 levels;

- further work to explore the feasibility of a long-term global aspirational goal for international aviation;
- development of a framework for market-based measures, including further elaboration of the guiding principles adopted by the Assembly, and exploration of a global scheme for international aviation;
- concrete steps to assist States to contribute to the global efforts;
- *de minimis* provisions to ensure that States with small contributions to the global air traffic are not burdened disproportionately; and
- States' action plans, covering information on CO₂ emissions reduction activities and assistance needs.

In short, we created an excellent basis on which to make very real progress over the next three years as we head into the next Assembly in 2013. It was very encouraging to note that this positive assessment was echoed by all major aviation stakeholders.

The State Department of the United States called it an unprecedented global commitment to collective action, among developed and developing countries around the world.

The European Union called it very significant because at a global level, governments and the aviation industry have for the first time agreed to cap greenhouse emissions from 2020.

IATA applauded ICAO Member States on achieving the first global governmental agreement with aspirational goals to stabilize carbon emissions.

Airports Council International said it was a historic agreement for a globally harmonized approach to addressing aviation's CO₂ emissions.

And other government and industry bodies saluted the determination of the ICAO membership to clearly put a stake in the ground on the way to reducing and eventually eliminating the effects of air transport on the environment.

The reason I single out these commendations is to stress that any progress we make in achieving a vision for 2020 can only come from widespread global cooperation on the part of all aviation stakeholders – governments, industry, civil society and users, both passengers and shippers of goods.

In closing then, I invite all of you to share in realizing this vision that provides the people of the world with a global air transport that is as safe, secure and sustainable as is humanly possible.

This generation and the ones that will follow will all benefit.
