



Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium (GANIS)
(Montréal, 20-23 September 2011)

1. Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of ICAO I would like to welcome you to the Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium.
2. Aviation is a global business – and ICAO is the global forum for civil aviation. ICAO works to achieve YOUR vision for the safe, secure and sustainable development of air transport.
3. Forecasts call for significant traffic growth in the near future, growth that will put a strain on a system already stretched to its limits.
4. To stay ahead of the capacity needs, more than \$120 billion dollars will be spent worldwide, over the next 10 years, on transforming the aviation system. Continuous improvement is necessary to enhance efficiency and maintain our already impressive safety record, while accommodating the growth in traffic. We are confident that by implementing these upgrades, we will generate significant strategic value, which includes safety improvements, as well as economic and environmental benefits.
5. However, these benefits cannot be achieved in the near future unless we take the necessary steps today...and take them together. While States, airports, air navigation service providers, air carriers and manufacturers must invest and play their individual role, we must all ‘work as one’ to achieve a globally interoperable aviation system.
6. ICAO can assist the aviation community by helping to outline the synchronization of those investments...raising the key issues that will allow decision makers to consider the aviation system as a whole... while outlining which part of the aviation system must invest, and when, to achieve maximum system-wide benefit...to resolve the current disconnect between investments and benefits in these early phases of deployment that is slowing down our movement forward.
7. That is why we are here today...to explore a more holistic way of planning, which we call “aviation system block upgrades”. A “block upgrade” is composed of the following elements:
 - A clearly defined measurable operational improvement;
 - The equipment and/or systems needed in the aircraft and on the ground;
 - The accompanying airborne and ground procedures necessary to make it happen, as well as new separation minimums – if applicable;
 - A positive business case over a clearly defined time period; and
 - An operational approval or certification plan for implementation.

8. The concept of “block upgrades” is a new way of thinking for ICAO. Defining the future in this way sets the stage for global interoperability. It also leads to more certainty in implementation and in the achievement of anticipated benefits: attaining performance targets linked to infrastructure investments by States and airports and air navigation service providers; global operational certainty for aircraft operators; and a predictable return on investment and the ability to compete fairly to a known baseline for equipment manufacturers.
9. This is not just an exercise for Europe and the United States. It must involve all members of the international community. The approach we are proposing is not a “one size fits all”. It is meant to be flexible and scalable, and it can be introduced and implemented by a State or region based on need and level of readiness. The approach also recognizes that *not all* the components will be required in all airspaces.
10. In this way, the “block upgrades” concept allows us to plan our collective resources efficiently and effectively. In fact, the entire agenda of the symposium is based on these block upgrades.
11. What I want to emphasize is that this new way of thinking means a new way of doing business at ICAO. Since the concept affects all the stakeholders, ICAO cannot work in isolation. That is why we adopted a multidisciplinary approach.
12. We invited experts from States with mature future systems plans. We invited the major international aviation stakeholders and Industry representatives. And we asked them to share their plans and activities, and their investments to date. With this in hand, we established what you will see this week – the first draft of the aviation system block upgrades.
13. But this was just a first step. Yesterday, we conducted a workshop where additional States provided their own plans. Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan and the Russian Federation all shared their visions of the future. In addition, Europe and the United States provided progress reports on their initiatives.
14. And this week, we expect to receive from you significant feedback on the global planning to date. We want you to share, in a fully transparent manner, where we are at this point in time and what adjustments we need to make to be fully ready for the upcoming 12th Air Navigation Conference in November 2012. More on that feedback in a moment.
15. The block upgrades also signal a change in the way we do our planning here, at ICAO. Blocks, or groupings of capabilities, which result in operational improvements are here to stay. As an organization, we need to think about the manner in which we organize ourselves in order to develop the required standards, in the context of this multidisciplinary approach.
16. So, that is the plan for the technical work. But, we all know that technology isn’t always the challenge. There are many institutional barriers as well. Political and economic questions have the potential to jeopardize the proposed approach.
17. To remove these kinds of roadblocks and facilitate the closing of the business case for block upgrades, I created what I call the Challenge Team. In this group of senior leaders and decision-makers, we can and we will challenge OURSELVES to pull together to turn the vision of a globally interoperable aviation system into reality.

18. I want to reiterate here that this Symposium represents a milestone in the development of the aviation system of the future. It is the first of its kind for ICAO. Traditionally, we engaged in a dialogue with States. But now, we want to engage all of you in the discussion.
19. We look forward to your ideas and suggestions as we refine the “block upgrades” concept. They will be considered for the next revision of the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, which will be presented to all Member States when they convene for the Air Navigation Conference next year. This Conference will define the planning horizon for the next 10 years.
20. As the future aviation system is expected to be planned from “curb to curb”, the Air Navigation Conference will include, for the first time, “block upgrades”, which will include throughput targets for Security and performance targets for the Environment.
21. The new approach is not a one-time exercise. It will represent a living chart for regional planning and will involve a process of on-going updates in the form of periodic Infrastructure Performance Reports.
22. That is why your participation is so critical. We want to hear what you have to say and we want your input to ensure we are heading in the right direction.
23. You may have also noticed all the booths that are set up outside. As part of the dialogue for the three days, we have invited members of the aviation community to share their innovations with you, so please take the time to visit the exhibition hall during the breaks.
24. We are all in this together, so let’s work together to build aviation’s future.
25. Thank you.

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