



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Washington International Aviation Club
(Washington, D.C., 17 January 2012)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the members of the Washington International Aviation Club and would like to thank you and your President, Andrew Steinberg, for this opportunity.

When you think about it, our two organizations have much in common.

Since 1961, the Aviation Club has been an effective forum for new ideas and new strategies related to commercial aviation in the United States and around the world. You have promoted interest in the development of aircraft, airports and air navigation, international agreements, cooperation and treaties, all related to international aviation.

For our part we have, since our creation in 1944, acted as the forum for Member States and industry to develop technical and operational standards, procedures and policies that enhance the integrity and efficiency of global air transport.

Over the years, ICAO has undergone many changes but it remains the only international framework for aviation. To meet the current and future needs of the international aviation community, and to maintain global air transport as a powerful contributor to economic and social development around the world, we are determined to keep changing and adapting to rapidly evolving circumstances.

As you are certainly aware, the sustained growth of air travel in the coming decades will exert tremendous pressure on air transport systems and infrastructure, many of which already operate at peak capacity in various parts of the world.

This implies that we set clear objectives for ourselves, and the best way to predict the future is to create it.

And so, what kind of future do we want to create for ourselves?

Picture this:

In 2030, even with record-breaking growth rates, civil aviation is safer than it has ever been and no region of the world has an accident rate much higher than the world average.

Likewise, aviation security measures are more effective and efficient than ever. They no longer represent an operational and costly burden for airlines, and passengers have rediscovered the joys of travelling by air.

As for the impact of the aviation sector on the environment, the ambitious targets of 2010 have been surpassed and the sector is well on its way to achieving carbon neutrality.

Overall, international aviation increasingly contributes to the economic development of our global society and, in line with the Chicago Convention, is a key factor in promoting peace and understanding among nations and peoples of the world.

I believe we can realize this vision if we collectively put in place the right strategies and actions to accelerate the transformation of global civil aviation.

To this end, my commitment as Secretary General of ICAO is to ensure that the Organization focuses its energies on three Strategic Objectives that matter most: safety, security, environmental protection and the sustainable development of air transport.

Allow me to illustrate, beginning with ICAO's *raison d'être*.

Safety

The global air transport system is as safe as it has ever been and 2011 was the safest year on record. We can therefore only keep pace and improve by focussing on those areas with the greatest return on investment of resources. And we must do so together, in a multidisciplinary way.

Our first target is **runway issues**, the number 1 cause of fatal accidents. In cooperation with our aviation partners, including the FAA, ICAO has established a Global Runway Safety Programme.

Our goal is to raise awareness and bring the industry's collective expertise, knowledge and best practices to bear on the range of runway safety-related events. The result has been a major update to the Runway Excursion Risk Reduction Toolkit.

Our number 2 priority is **loss of control in flight**. While fewer accidents are caused by loss of control in flight, they are almost always catastrophic and the primary cause of fatalities. Again this year, we will be partnering with key regulators, including the FAA and EASA, to further explore this issue.

Fatigue is another worrisome source of accidents where a global approach is required. Last year, we introduced new Fatigue-risk Management standards and guidance material for regulators and industry.

Safety is also dependent on the efficiency of regulators around the world.

While North American and European regulators are strong, 10+ years of ICAO safety oversight audits tell us that more than 50 ICAO States have less than a 50 percent level of implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices, the essential building blocks of a sound aviation system.

When I went to school, that was a failing grade. So we grabbed the bull by the horns and developed a **Safety Collaborative Assistance Network**, which matches States that demonstrate political will to act with States ready to assist through consulting and training. We also established a new voluntary safety fund called SAFE, to encourage States to donate funds for assistance projects if in-kind training is not an option. Results thus far are promising.

For those States that have yet to demonstrate the required political will, I, along with the President of the Council, have been making personal visits to Heads of States and Transport Ministers. Thanks to the proactive analyses methodologies we have developed, I can show them the risk they run of a major aviation accident on "their watch" if they don't do something.

We want to compel decision-makers to take action on safety risks before they result in accidents. We want to see concrete action and tangible results. Without political commitment, our best intentions are just words.

Now, these regulators with a failing mark are just part of the safety puzzle. Over the past year, we have been working with IATA, ACI and CANSO on an overarching aviation mechanism of Systems Assessments involving airlines, airports and air navigation services providers.

All three organizations have agreed to share information through the ICAO Global Safety Information Exchange, the result of an agreement signed with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the European Commission and IATA.

This collaboration creates a broader pool of information with which to assess the overall health of the aviation system. The more the network expands the more lives we will undoubtedly save.

Finally, for the first time in the history of ICAO, we recently published a Global Aviation Safety Report available to all stakeholders and the travelling public on our website. It is both a fascinating snapshot of aviation safety around the world and a grouping of everything we do in support of safe air travel into one compelling “safety story.” This is “must” reading for anyone in aviation, as is our revised ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan to be released in the coming months.

Another area of Safety I want to address deals with **aviation capacity and efficiency**. Over the next 10 years, ICAO States will invest more than 120 billion dollars to upgrade their national aviation infrastructures.

While we often speak of international harmonization, getting there is another story. In the context of air traffic management, it is a question of political will....and timing.

I believe we have both the political will, and the right timing, to harmonize the modernization programmes underway by the United States in the form of NEXTGEN and the European Community in the form of SESAR.

The excellent cooperation between the US and the EU, ICAO and other industry stakeholders on the interoperability of these systems has laid the foundation for the development of standards necessary for the future deployment of the new technologies. We refer to them as Aviation System Block Upgrades and I expect them to be formally endorsed during ICAO’s Air Navigation Conference in November 2012.

In effect, we have taken the international elements of both NEXTGEN and SESAR and grouped them into manageable “chunks” called Blocks which will evolve over the next 20 years.

The entire aviation community will need to either equip, or upgrade, along the same timeline....or the overall benefits will not be achieved. This has long been one of aviation’s challenges, moving in unison, and I am happy that we are well along the path to a global buy-in.

To reinforce the process, I established a Future Aviation Challenge Team which brings together aviation decision-makers from the FAA and the Joint Planning and Development Office, the European Community and the industry.

Together we must and will further improve safety, passenger service, and our good stewardship of the environment.

Security

Let me now turn to security, the flip side of the safety coin.

Terrorist attacks against civil aviation can be horrific and the potential for substantial and costly disruptions to aircraft operations enormous.

Even when acts of terrorism are thwarted, they can significantly undermine public confidence in air travel and seriously affect the bottom line of carriers. Threats to aviation have become more sophisticated and diverse. They evolve rapidly and target all components of the air transport system.

Effective security regimes must therefore be smart, cohesive, multi-layered, sustainable, and based on harmonized approaches among travel and trade partners. Terrorists seek vulnerabilities throughout the global network. They do not respect borders. All States have a vested interest in a global web of effective national and regional security regimes.

I do agree we have made considerable progress in aviation security over the past decade. We can better anticipate, detect, intercept and protect against attacks. We can also respond more appropriately when attacks do occur. Still, we must continually reinforce and adapt our strategy.

That message came out loud and clear at the 2010 ICAO Assembly, as Member States unanimously adopted a Declaration on Aviation Security – a reaffirmation of their commitment to work collaboratively and proactively to address evolving threats to civil aviation.

The Declaration called for enhanced international cooperation in key areas, including the implementation of advanced screening technologies, the strengthening of air cargo security and more effective assistance and capacity-building activities.

In all of these and more, ICAO continues to exercise its leadership by facilitating global cooperation and implementation.

To strengthen security procedures and improve passenger facilitation, we are collaborating with aviation security authorities and the industry to develop an airport checkpoint of the future and improved screening procedures.

For air cargo, we adopted new and more stringent security standards, notably a requirement for States to establish a supply chain security process.

We are also expanding our relationship with the World Customs Organization and other regulatory agencies to develop appropriate new security controls for air cargo, while preventing unnecessary delays in the movement of goods across international boundaries.

This is a huge undertaking given the vast amount of cargo handled by the world's airlines: 48 million tonnes in 2010 alone, more than half of which was carried aboard passenger aircraft.

Improved security can also imply assistance. If it is to play its role fully, ICAO must focus its resources and attention on those States with the greatest need for assistance in meeting their obligations.

Early last year in New Delhi, I kicked off a series of regional conferences to promote the implementation of the Assembly Declaration on Aviation Security. Others were held in Dakar, Moscow and just last week, in Kuala Lumpur. In each case, States and other stakeholders agreed on concrete actions for collectively and individually strengthening aviation security in accordance with the Declaration.

What I find inspiring about these conferences is the determination among States to continuously improve their security systems, and the willingness on the part of industry and other stakeholders to work with regulators.

By building consensus on critical priorities and issues, we are paving the way for a successful High-Level Conference on Aviation Security this September in Montréal. That is when the realities and concerns of each region — considered collectively — will contribute to a global solution for strengthening the aviation security framework.

Environmental Protection

In much the same way that security is a global problem that requires global solutions, so is the issue of international aviation and environmental protection.

In the specific area of climate, we have our work cut out for us. While there are clear differences among Member States, we still have to come up with a global solution within the ICAO framework.

The basis for arriving at a solution is the Resolution on environmental protection adopted by the ICAO Assembly of 2010. Although it contains a number of reservations, it nevertheless made ICAO the first United Nations Agency to lead a sector in the establishment of a globally harmonized agreement for addressing its CO₂ emissions.

The Resolution includes global aspirational goals of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to the year 2050 and stabilizing CO₂ emissions at the 2020 levels. It also calls for facilitating the development and wider use of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation and a target date of 2013 for the development of a global CO₂ certification standard for aircraft.

One of the highlights of the Resolution is the voluntary submission to ICAO by June 2012 of national action plans. These action plans will allow States to identify how they can reduce CO₂ emissions from international aviation and what assistance they may need. This will help ICAO to monitor progress in achieving global aspirational goals and to address specific needs of States.

With respect to the EU-Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS), an issue which I know is close to your hearts, the ICAO Council adopted a Declaration on the subject in November 2011. It urges the EU and its Member States to refrain from including international flights by non-EU carriers to and from an airport in the territory of an EU Member State in its emissions trading system. It also urges the EU and its Member States to work collaboratively with the rest of the international community to address aviation emissions.

As you well know, disagreement persists.

I can assure you that ICAO is committed to accelerating its work on the development of a framework for market-based measures (MBMs) in international aviation and on the feasibility of a global MBM scheme.

A briefing session is planned for 20 January to update Council Members on progress made in this area.

As for the climate change conference held in Durban last December, we are continuing to closely monitor the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - the UNFCCC – to ensure that international aviation is not singled out as a source of revenue in a disproportionate manner.

Conclusion

As we look to the future, we will continue to evolve, to meet the rapidly changing expectations of our Member States, the industry, and the travelling public. You have my word on that !

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