

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE ICAO SECRETARY GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)
MR. RAYMOND BENJAMIN,
TO THE 49TH CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL
AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

“Managing Air Transport Growth in the Asia Pacific Region through a Collaborative Approach to Safety, Security and Sustainability”

(New Delhi – 8 to 12 October 2012)

It is a very special honor for me to be here with you for the 49th annual conference of DGCA's of the Asia and Pacific Regions.

I would like to express my gratitude and thank sincerely the Government of India for hosting this Conference. It is an excellent opportunity for me to interact with key aviation decision-makers in a region that is home to some 70% of the world's population, and where the potential for growth is perhaps the highest in terms of absolute numbers.

And let me stress on this last point that Asia/Pacific air traffic growth projections are very promising.

ICAO's medium-term forecast is for your Region's airlines to grow considerably faster than the global average, at 8% this year, 8.6% next year, and 8.8% in 2014. Long-term prospects are equally impressive. By 2014, your region is forecast to represent over 30% of all air travel globally.

To put these figures in a broader context, ICAO's current projections indicate that no other region in the world will achieve a higher level of growth between now and 2020.

Looking further ahead, and considering the global picture, ICAO projections point to Asia/Pacific passenger totals more than doubling by 2030, likely exceeding 6 billion per year and more than doubling North America's totals. The number of aircraft departures will also double over this period, to well over 50 million a year.

In light of these very impressive figures, there is no doubt that air transport growth is our most important challenge, both here in the Asia/Pacific and for the entire air transport community. This in turn leads us to consider some of the critical areas where aviation will need to cooperate even better than it does today.

At ICAO we are committed to driving change and to leading States and industry in addressing the obstacles that stand between efficient air transport today and tomorrow.

In the constantly growing global market for air services, the safety, security and sustainability of air navigation are paramount. The theme of your conference rightly points to the collaborative approach as the best way forward to meet these objectives.

I totally agree. From the very beginning, dialogue and cooperation have shaped global air transport, helping it to become the safest and most efficient mode of mass transportation. They will continue to do so in the future.

In this spirit, I commend you for having placed safety at the top of your agenda.

ICAO is currently coordinating revisions to its strategic planning documents to assist Member States and industry stakeholders to collaborate more effectively in coordinating safety and air navigation progress. The new Global Aviation Safety Plan will offer high-level policy guidance to the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) recently established by ICAO around the world.

The RASGs are an essential component of our new Safety Plan's structure and work programme. They will be helping to harmonize all activities addressing aviation safety issues worldwide.

These groups will also facilitate ICAO's recognition of existing State safety bodies, provide a formal reporting channel for collaborative monitoring and analysis, and build on the achievements of existing sub-regional safety organizations.

Complementing this high-level coordination of safety activities will be ICAO's new Global Air Navigation Capacity & Efficiency Plan.

As many of you are aware in this regard, 2012 is a very important year in that it will culminate in November with ICAO's 12th Air Navigation Conference. This event, held once every decade, will establish global endorsement of ICAO's new aviation system Block Upgrades.

The Block Upgrades were first introduced to the international community at the Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium, held in September 2011. They represent a systems-engineering approach to CNS/ATM modernization and have been developed based on a broad consensus between States and industry.

We must all work together during the 12th Air Navigation Conference to endorse the Block Upgrade approach, obtain commitments, and formulate the recommendations that will allow us to realize a harmonized global air navigation system for international civil aviation.

This takes into consideration that States will need to invest some 120 billion dollars for upgrades to the global Air Traffic Management system over the next few decades. These upgrades are essential to realize the additional capacity required to safely manage the significant growth in air traffic now being projected.

Accordingly, the Block Upgrades are based on a flexible and transparent strategy that will offer States and operators the level of planning and investment clarity they need to properly determine their local ATM and avionics needs.

ICAO's objective is clear in this area: we must consolidate a global approach to efficiency in the skies. Member States and selected international organizations will review the latest version of the Air Navigation Global Plan at the 12th Air Navigation Conference, endorse its priorities and refine the way forward.

I am also pleased to see that Performance-based Navigation, or PBN, is progressing well in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Asia/Pacific PBN Task Force has developed a robust review process and the emphasis on PBN educational workshops has resulted in a number of new PBN plan submissions. Still, more work needs to be done and I urge your States to complete the PBN implementation plan as a matter of urgency so as to meet the timelines stipulated in the Assembly Resolution.

Turning to aviation security, ICAO recently concluded a very successful High-level Conference on this subject. The recommendations of the Conference will help to prioritize and guide our security activities over the coming triennium. Ministers, senior government officials, representatives of international and regional organizations, as well as aviation, law enforcement and cargo industry stakeholders contributed comprehensively to this process. The High-level Conference on Aviation Security was the culmination of a series of six Regional Conferences on Aviation Security covering all regions that was initiated here in New Delhi in February 2011.

The further enhancement of the air cargo security supply chain, while being mindful of the necessity to facilitate international trade growth and the movement of goods, was a matter of significant importance for the High-level Conference. The Conference recommended that ICAO adopt new air cargo security Standards and Recommended Practices in Annex 17 on a fast track.

This event, in addition to a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Customs Organization and intensified working arrangements with the Universal Postal Union, underline the importance we are placing on increased collaboration in the security field.

Another example is our cooperation with national aviation security authorities and industry stakeholders to develop future passenger screening checkpoint models. The goal here is to better integrate new technologies, intelligence and passenger data with risk-based techniques that will allow us to more efficiently target our security measures.

ICAO is implementing an aviation security assistance strategy that takes into account sound risk-management principles to assist States in addressing deficiencies identified through ICAO aviation security audits. A key element of this strategy is training, and we look forward to joint assistance and training activities with the WCO and other partners.

Building on the importance of collaboration, ICAO proposes to establish and lead an Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation Security Coordination Forum to be held in conjunction with the annual DGCA Conferences. The objective of the Forum is to reinforce a unified approach to identifying and addressing the regional implications of emerging security issues. It will complement established regional fora, such as the Heads of Regulators Meeting.

With respect to the protection of the environment, ICAO's approach is no different than for safety and security. It rests on the universally-recognized truth that climate change is a global problem that requires global solutions.

ICAO has taken decisive steps to meet its responsibilities for minimizing the environmental impact of international aviation. Activities continue to support research, policies and regulatory frameworks related to noise, local air quality and climate change.

One area of intense activity is the development of an aircraft CO₂ certification Standard by the end of 2013. We are also facilitating greener operations, and a specialized ICAO Fuel Savings Estimation Tool has been developed to help States quantify related environmental benefits.

Flights on sustainable alternative fuels are now a global reality. An ICAO expert group is developing policy recommendations to facilitate the availability of such fuels in a timely manner and in sufficient quantities for aviation.

During its upcoming session in November, the Council of ICAO will consider evaluations of options relative to market-based measures, along with a proposed framework to support their implementation. This is no easy task and a good deal of work still needs to be done before we report to the 38th Assembly next year.

We have been encouraged by the active engagement of Member States in the development and submission of their Action Plans on CO₂ emissions. These Plans help us to identify implementation assistance needs and an ICAO seminar later this month will consider practical approaches for providing such assistance.

Some APAC States have completed their Plans while many of you are now finalizing your submissions. I would take this opportunity to encourage any States who have not yet completed their Plans to do so at their earliest opportunity.

With the foreseeable growth of air transport in the coming years, the challenge of realizing capacity and safety objectives, while mitigating the impact of international civil aviation on climate change, should not be underestimated.

ICAO and its Member States, in close collaboration with the aviation industry, must continue to take concrete steps towards developing global solutions.

An important step in that process is agreeing on key issues relating to air transport financing, regulation and liberalization. These topics will be discussed at ICAO's *Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference*, which will be held in March 2013.

Specifically, the *Sixth Air Transport Conference* is projected to recommend a new regulatory framework seeking to ensure the air transport's economically sustainable future, with implications for:

- Market access
- Air carrier ownership and control
- Consumer protection
- Fair competition
- Taxation and levies
- And the economics of airports and ANSPs

A further collaborative initiative now being pursued, and an important reason for my present journey through the Asia-Pacific, is ICAO's proposal to establish a new Regional Sub-Office for your region. These considerations have been moved forward through the ICAO Council after some initial proposals in 2009, and I will be reporting back to the Council Members shortly after my return.

The rationale for an APAC Regional Sub-Office is based on the clear recognition of your Region's current rate of growth and increasing importance to the global system. Accordingly, ICAO's plans call for a strengthening of our presence here, in a manner which complements the established responsibilities and purpose of our APAC Regional Office in Bangkok.

This new Regional Sub-Office will therefore be designed on a project-oriented basis, primarily focused on maximizing Air Traffic Management performance. It will assist with the collecting and reporting of the real-time data that is now so essential to ICAO's revised work programme and monitoring initiatives in this area.

Before I conclude, I would like to raise an issue of common concern that cuts across all disciplines – the availability of skilled personnel to support the expansion of every aspect of the air transport system over the coming decades.

There are many pieces to this puzzle, including recruitment strategies, domestic education policies, employee retainment, and training. To meet this issue ICAO has brought together a diverse range of stakeholders under the umbrella of its Next Generation of Aviation Professionals initiative. We have also produced new training certification guidelines globally through the TRAINAIR PLUS programme.

In conclusion, whether we are talking about aviation safety or security, seamless skies, or any other aspect of international civil aviation, emphasis now is being placed on promoting partnerships between States and regional bodies, whether political or economic, as well as with industry, where much of the expertise resides.

Our objective with these efforts, as always, is to provide users with the safest and most efficient mode of transportation possible. I look forward to the results of your deliberations.
