



OPENING REMARKS BY THE ICAO SECRETARY GENERAL,  
MR. RAYMOND BENJAMIN  
TO THE JOINT ICAO-ECAC AVIATION SECURITY SEMINAR FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN  
(Paris, 28 January 2014)

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization, it's my great pleasure to welcome all of you to this joint *ICAO-ECAC Aviation Security Seminar* for the States of the Mediterranean sub-region.

I would like to begin today by acknowledging the long and very productive association ICAO has enjoyed with the European Civil Aviation Conference, an Organization which I happened to know during my earlier days.

I would like to pay a special tribute to the President and the Executive Secretary of ECAC, my friends Catalin and Salvatore, as together we have helped our Organizations make some excellent progress, both in Europe and sometimes beyond. I am confident that, moving forward, this effective and productive relationship will continue to drive improvements across the range of our joint areas of priority.

I would also like to stress from the outset that coordinated capacity building efforts will remain an important support component underlying all of our AVSEC programmes and goals. ICAO is committed to this aim, and to expanding its partnerships with Member States, in order to deliver new types of targeted assistance such as on-the-job training and project management resources.

I am particularly pleased to open today's seminar because it represents the first time ICAO and ECAC have combined their resources for this type of event. It is also the first time that several ICAO Regional Offices – namely Paris, Dakar and Cairo – have joined together to conduct a seminar on this theme.

Inclusive coordination in this area is essential when you consider the growing complexity of the subject matter before us, not to mention the multitude of players involved in achieving effective aviation security today.

Indeed the acknowledgement of this complexity, as well as the very complementary nature of our security and facilitation goals, played a large part in why the ICAO Council, at my suggestion, established both security and facilitation under a single Strategic Objective for ICAO during this new triennium.

An additional ICAO emphasis in this area is to determine efficient and *sustainable* AVSEC solutions for our Member States, which requires taking a more inclusive approach to our security and facilitation challenges. Enhanced intraregional and interregional cooperation are clearly imperative to achieving these goals – a fact which has played a major part in why ICAO has now established dedicated security and facilitation personnel in all of our Regional Offices.

Our meeting today underscores for us then the importance of *harmonization* across regions, and the critical role of *cooperation* in achieving efficient and robust global aviation security measures.

I would also stress here that it is very much due to the enhanced levels of international cooperation in the last few years that we have witnessed such tremendous progress in strengthening the global aviation security framework.

ICAO has been very grateful to its States and other stakeholders for their impressive engagement in the policy process that has been required, and especially for their high-level commitments at the political level to enhancing global aviation security and facilitation.

This involvement proved critical to the success of ICAO's High-level Conference on Aviation Security in 2012, as well as the series of regional AVSEC conferences that paved the way for global consensus at that event.

And of course similarly strong levels of political engagement were also essential to the success of the ICAO Assembly, which concluded its 38th Session last October.

The 38th Assembly confirmed ICAO's emphasis on achieving greater balance between effective control measures and system-wide connectivity and efficiency. Risk-management-based prioritization, mutual recognition of equivalent security measures, and other key principles will now serve as foundational components to our future security and facilitation planning.

States at our 38th Assembly also acknowledged the progress made since 2010 through the strengthening of Annex 17 Standards and Recommended Practices dealing with air cargo, the delivery of technical assistance and cooperation in all Regions, and the completion of the second cycle of ICAO's Universal Security Audit Programme.

They additionally endorsed new goals for us to pursue, such as the application of a Continuous Monitoring Approach to security audits, and the scope and substance of ICAO's new Traveller Identification Programme – which represents the logical evolution of our earlier and very successful work in the Machine Readable Travel Document, or MRTD area.

This new programme will establish a more holistic approach to all aspects of the document security and identification management process. The ultimate objective here is to maximize travel document security and eliminate weaknesses in the identity management frameworks supporting visa and passport issuance, while continuing to streamline the clearance of air travellers at border control points.

Above all, and supporting what I highlighted earlier, the 38th Assembly outcomes reinforced that success in aviation security and facilitation must be built on a foundation of improved international cooperation, which is why you have joined us here.

During the course of this seminar, you will hear leading experts discuss the significance of these developments in the field of aviation security. In addition, you will be apprised of the specific challenges we must address, individually and collectively, to continue safeguarding civil aviation from terrorist attacks.

I would highlight that, although we have made great progress in our security and facilitation objectives of late, much more remains to be done and this seminar will be helpful in the refinement of your interregional programmes.

In conclusion friends and colleagues, I wish you a highly productive next few days. I am confident that both you yourselves and civil aviation security and facilitation more generally will benefit from your participation in this meeting, and I thank you all for taking part.

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