



OPENING REMARKS BY ICAO SECRETARY GENERAL,
MR. RAYMOND BENJAMIN
TO THE ICAO-WCO JOINT CONFERENCE
ON ENHANCING AIR CARGO SECURITY AND FACILITATION

(Manama, Bahrain, 16 April 2014)

His Excellency the Minister of Interior of Bahrain, Lieutenant-General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa;

*His Excellency the Minister of Transportation of Bahrain, Mr. Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed;
Secretary General of the World Customs Organization, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya;
Director General of the Universal Postal Union, Mr. Bishar Abdirahman Hussein;*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization, I am pleased to welcome you to this ICAO-WCO Conference on Enhancing Air Cargo Security and Facilitation.

I would like to begin by extending a special thank you to our hosts from the Civil Aviation Affairs section in the Ministry of Transport of Bahrain, especially as they have assisted so effectively with the required advance arrangements and provided us with such an impressive venue. ICAO is honoured to join the World Customs Organization and the Kingdom of Bahrain today in presenting this forum. The timing is very much à propos, as this year the global aviation community celebrates the 40th anniversary of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices for aviation security and the 65th anniversary of Standards and Recommended Practices for aviation facilitation.

I am also delighted to have the Universal Postal Union participate in our meeting, as ICAO attaches great importance to coordinated efforts to secure the world's air mail. Finally, it gives me great pleasure to welcome our partners from industry, as well as other stakeholders. Your support and contributions to this forum will be greatly appreciated.

World events in recent years have demonstrated the importance of collaboration between security authorities at the State level and across international borders. They highlight the constant need to join forces to assure that international transportation and trade are supported by all necessary and appropriate security and facilitation measures.

One such example was the October 2010 plot to sabotage two aircraft using improvised explosive devices hidden in computer printer cartridges. It was as a direct result of this incident that ICAO and the WCO formalized cooperation on air cargo security matters. We recognized this was an essential step because supply chain issues relate to *both* security and customs procedures. Consequently the requirements of aviation security and customs need to be considered on an aligned and complementary basis.

And I would stress here that this type of collaboration is not only crucial between ICAO and the WCO, but between all air cargo stakeholders, namely as it forms the cornerstone of a robust and resilient supply chain.

In this regard, ICAO and the International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) recently strengthened their collaboration through the signature of a Declaration of Intent in 2013, aimed at reinforcing cooperation on technical matters, such as air cargo and mail security and facilitation, market access for air cargo services, air safety and environmental practices.

Over the next few days, we will hear leading experts discuss how air cargo stakeholders are cooperating and look at ways that this can be intensified to increase the security and efficiency of global air cargo operations. I would like to encourage all of you to take an active role in the discussions to come, as the more perspectives we consider the stronger our supply chain will become. Above all, your participation highlights the importance that we are working together to address future challenges.

In Singapore, at the first of these Joint Conferences on Enhancing Air Cargo Security and Facilitation, ICAO and the WCO made good preliminary progress in this area, agreeing to align our cargo security regulatory frameworks in order to avoid unnecessary and costly duplication of measures and processes – not just for ourselves but for governments and industry as well.

Much more has been accomplished in the days since Singapore, with the key principles that underlie the Singapore Communiqué now having been embraced by the ICAO High-level Conference on Aviation Security in 2012, and subsequently by ICAO's 38th Assembly in late 2013. An ICAO-WCO Action Plan is now in place and guiding our joint efforts.

Besides these important collaborative and outreach efforts, ICAO has also been progressing work in its own backyard to reinforce supply chain security. First and foremost, I would point out how Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention, containing our aviation security standards and provisions, was strengthened as a matter of urgency to address concerns about air cargo's high-profile vulnerabilities.

At the same time, we continue to promote the implementation of risk-based security measures, an approach which is vital to facilitate the flow of cargo, permit the implementation of more cost-effective cargo security procedures, and from an overall standpoint to help maintain the industry's economic competitiveness.

By pursuing sustainable and cost-effective security solutions, the cargo sector will need to optimize the benefits of innovative processes and technologies. Potential advancements will be explored further this October at ICAO's first-ever Symposium on Innovation in Aviation Security, which will be held jointly with IATA's AVSEC World.

As we look forward, I am encouraged by recent progress to make civil aviation safer by addressing cargo security concerns. I am also pleased to see the joint focus placed on improving facilitation. This is essential when we consider that the world's airlines transported more than 49 million tonnes of cargo in 2012 alone, which represents approximately one-third of the value of all international trade.

One way that ICAO demonstrates its leadership on the international stage is by leveraging its unique position at the heart of the air transport sector to identify emerging trends and realign global priorities.

Our current strategic objective to enhance worldwide aviation security and facilitation on a complementary basis has been strongly supported by our Member States, and it will help guide both the air transport and cargo sectors in the crucial years ahead. This Conference, I am pleased to say, aligns perfectly with this new strategy and with our now shared cargo priorities.

In closing I would once more thank our Conference partners for joining with ICAO to make this event possible. I wish you a very fruitful day of discussions.

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